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THE STREET OF THE ISLANDS

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THE STREET OF THE ISLANDS

Porque me pareció, pensando en estas cosas, que los hombres son unas islas, y que, en medio de esas islas, pasa el camino de la vida.

For it seemed to me, thinking on these things, that every man is an island, and that, in the midst of these islands, runs the street of life.

THE STREET OF THE ISLANDS

STARK YOUNG

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CONTENTS

The Land of Juan de Dios	1
Assisi Farmer	45
The Light on the Hills	51
Cowboy at the Antique Shop Window	75
The Passionate Road	81
Felipe	117
Beatus Rex	125
Miss Sissie	151
Campo Santo	159
The Harp Player	185
Ora Pro Nobis	195

THE STREET OF THE ISLANDS

THE LAND OF JUAN DE DIOS

On the last Saturday in April, 1746, word came that the Señor Rafael Vasco de Salazar and his company had already reached the mission of San José, where his carriage was being washed and the mules watered at the Aqueduct, and would soon arrive in the town. He had been expected in San Antonio de Béjar three or four days already, but had delayed at San Juan Bautista to celebrate his mistress' birthday. She was Carmen Gonzales, the celebrated dancer from Salvatierra, who rode with him. Couriers, sent ahead to make sure that everything was ready in the house he had caused to be taken for himself, had told all this. Within an hour, they said, he would ride into the plaza.

It was a small city and the news had spread to every house. A very rich young man, people said, was coming to take up a grant from the King. He had travelled from Madeira, where his family lived on their estates, to the family property in Mexico and thence to Texas. His own grant began somewhere to the north of the town and ran, it was

rumored, a great stretch of country beyond the Medina hills, where silver fields were believed to lie. Every year about this time Indians from that country came to town, with strips of silver which they exchanged for the supplies they wanted, and went away again. People said that the silver in these hills extended north to the rivers, the Blanco, San Miguelito, Pedernales and beyond; there was a legend of gold as well. Nobody knew anything for certain, only what they saw with their own eyes from the Indians, who told nothing.

Any traveller, coming up those many leagues from the south, along the Camino Real and over the mountains and flat plains, was likely to go first thing to San Fernando, with a candle and a prayer for his deliverance from the Indians, robbers, bandits and marauders of all sorts, who were ready to waylay him, and from the scorching sun, wind, dust and other natural enemies of health. Half the town was standing along the street to the Plaza of San Fernando to see the young man pass by in his red-wheeled carriage, his mistress beside him, her maid and parrot cage sitting opposite, and after the carriage, his servants, the five soldiers

granted him for a guard, and diverse persons and stragglers that every train to the north was sure to gather at San Luis Potosí, Charcas and Sierra Gorda along the route. The wagons and mules had been left not far away at the edge of town, the company, save for the three in the carriage, went the rest of the way on foot. Don Rafael Vasco de Salazar rode in a blue coat, turquoise color, with gold on the collar; Carmen Gonzales sat beside him in a green mantle, a yellow hat and gloves flamingo red.

At the very end of this bright, grave procession going to kneel before the candles in the shadowy church, there was a woman in a black dress, with a black mantilla over her head, who walked alone. The fatigue of the journey and the eager glances she gave the faces of the people along the street delayed her progress and caused her to lag behind some paces. At length some boys began to point and jeer at her, first one boy and then several, running along, peering into the white face with the strange, searching eyes. Doña Remedios turned her head quickly away, she knew there might be something absurd about her staring like that into the

crowd, glancing about her like a haunted woman. The boys grew bolder. "I have known worse than that," she thought. "What does it matter?" She had not time to see the faces of so many people, not to look well at every face, that was the trouble. A little peon with gray hair stepped out of a doorway and cuffed one of the boys over the head.

"That will teach you."

He took off his cap and bowed, looking gently into her eyes,

"Excuse them, Señora, little fools."

She thanked him.

"Boys are fools," he said.

"It's no matter," she said. "Tell me, have you heard of a Don Juan Estrada? Juan de Dios Ramirez Estrada?"

The peon bowed again.

"But, Señora, he is my master, I belong to that hacienda, four leagues from town."

"I heard a rumor that he was here in San Antonio," she said. "To think you know him!"

"Excuse me, Señora, there's nothing strange in that. He has two hundred peons, Señora. And more. San Antonio is no large place."

She was not listening. "Yes, yes, you are very kind," she said and hurried on. She clasped her hands to check their trembling—when you have waited so long—"My son, my son, my son! What will he say?" she cried. The little peon stood gazing after her, puzzled, and shaking his head.

She was the daughter of a ruined nobleman who had been a poet, as well as a spendthrift, in his youth, and the friend of scholars; they used to visit him later on in his great old tottering farmhouse in Castile. He had a palace in Toledo, but for many years the great gates had not been opened, and the superb, long damask at the windows had faded almost white. In this country house, with its name of Montesclaros on the high old gate, far off somewhere in the hills behind Avila, Remedios had spent her life. Her mother had died when she was born. She lived quietly, a lonely girl, knowing only these men, listening to her father and his friends, afraid of him, until at length he married her to a suitor who was the younger son of a great marquis and in his own right a conde. Condesa de Villanueva she was, therefore, but after what happened she never used

the title and thought of herself solely as Doña Remedios, her father's daughter.

The marquis, her father-in-law, granted the young couple apartments in the family palace, where the two older sons and their families also lived. Soon after his child was born, the conde began at intervals to absent himself from home, going off on journeys here and there; first to Estremadura and the south, wandering, he said; then he said less of what he did and stayed away longer. They heard that he went to the Spanish islands, to the Indies, even to America somewhere; nobody knew; they thought him mad. He had grown to hate his parents, especially his mother, who doted on him above every one, whined and hung on his neck; he hated his brothers and most of all his wife, who was beginning to love him. Only his son seemed to keep his heart, little Juan de Dios. The love the mother had for his child merely annoyed him, he used to frown if she so much as touched the child, having had too much of that sort of thing himself. One morning when Juan was five years old he could not be found anywhere, but there was a letter saying they need never expect to see either

the child or the father again. However prostrate with despair she was, for the child had been her life, however white, frail and hidden, it made no difference; the whole palace of the conde's family, servants and all, hated Remedios, as if she were to blame for what had happened. There was nothing to do but to go back to her father, who was infuriated by this disgrace to his name that nobody could do anything about, but not sorry to have a daughter's care again, for he was getting old.

When she used to lie for hours across the big carved bed with its dim curtains, in her room with the whitewashed walls and blue beams overhead, old Manuela sitting on the edge of the bed, holding the little hand in hers, he would mount the stair and come and stand looking down at them. People said he was the tallest man in Castile and had a beard like Cervantes' portrait.

"Now, Manuela, what's the matter with her?" he would say, knowing very well what the matter was, for this was the fiftieth time.

"She's crying for her baby, Don Enrique, that's it, she wants to go searching for him."

"But that's nonsense. Nobody knows where he

went with the child, whether somewhere in Spain, giving up his name, or in the islands, or the New World."

"She wants her little boy."

"But I am old and could never go far," he said, "could she go alone?" Then he would say, enjoying his measures like a poet: "On a vain search? Could she go beyond Cuba or San Domingo, San Salvador, or to San Luis, Guadalupe, to Vera Cruz in Mexico or to the cities of the Andes?"

After her father had spoken thus and had gone, Doña Remedios would take her hand away even from Manuela and let it lie stretched out with the other hand above her head. "I am alone, alone, alone."

And then, after a while, the little hand in hers, or the sound of the little voice, the little feet on the floor, or the small soft body against her breast, were less present to her; at least they came less often. She began to think less of her own loss and had even more than ever that terrible anxiety lest he should need her; in her dreams she saw him in trouble, or he was ill, she never believed that he was dead.

During these years, save for the women servants, and some of the farm women, she was thrown only in the company of men. Her father and his friends were the only education she received. Growing older with the years, along with him, they used to come every season to visit him in the faded, gusty house. One or two of them were from Avila, the rest scholars from the university at Salamanca. Don Felipe Herrera, the theologian and author of the Commentaries on the Psalms, whose poem from the XXIII Psalm was said to have saved him from the Inquisition; Don Andrés de Segura, the most celebrated Platonist in Spain in his day, and others, coming across the country in their rattling carriages, staying several days, talking together hours on end, of philosophy, of poetry and government, of the nature of love. Remedios sat silent at the foot of her father's table, listening.

And as she listened, she saw these men drinking the Amantillado that was dwindling every month in the cellar, and the good red wine of the farm, and eating the ham and the sausages, the artichokes, the puchero and the cakes that Manuela

cooked out of the lean rations from the neglected farm, she heard the proud, high things they talked. She heard her father pressing these viands on his guests as if his were indeed an overflowing larder and the finest wines of Jerez, or Malaga, forever on their way to him, she saw them soaring and roaring away with their big thoughts, as if there were no such matters as finding bread and meat, like oblivious cocks flying out of the barnyard—that was the man of it. "They are only children," she would say to herself, looking at them with her dark, quiet eyes. Men were eagles, children, dreamers, they were the wings flying off the ground, the sowers, the seed.

As time passed her grief went farther in and became a kind of hidden solitude. Thinking of her child she searched her heart. Was she asking him back again too much for herself? She came at length to think of woman as like the land around her, woman as the earth, waiting, eternal, warm, in which the seed fell. She had heard so much of woman's duty, so many assumptions of what a woman should do, that she had tried to think it out for herself. She said to herself at length, "It's not

that I must give myself to a child, not that I sacrifice myself, but must fulfill myself as the earth does." Then she thought how Don Felipe had said: "Woman from whose breasts for countless ages has flowed the river of life." Women, he had said, ought to desire to be mothers, it is their duty. But that, too, was a man talking. It took her a long time to think out an answer for herself. "No, there's no ought, no duty about it. But what we can say," she thought, "is this: happy are they who love what is by necessity in their natures." That seemed to her a true way to put it.

Sixteen years passed. Her son was a man now, he was of age. She began to think more and more of the relation of a mother and her son. There was so much sentiment talked on the subject, so much droning about the love of mothers, so much advantage taken of the son, to tie to him, to hang upon him, to feed one's emotions on him. There must be none of that. There must be dignity, there must be grace, decent form, respect, between mother and son. Word came, by way of a friend of her father's in Toledo, that the Conde de Villanueva was dead. The word had come to the Toledo pal-

ace through a Jesuit returning from the college in Puebla; nothing was said of the son. For days and nights Remedios' flesh went hot and cold; she prayed for a sign from the Mother of God, knowing all the time that she could not leave her father, not while he lived.

It was three years yet before Don Enrique left the bed he had caused to be set up in the library, where he had been with his ancestors' portraits for seven months, to be laid in the chapel vault, where he would be with their bones forever. Doña Remedios sold the farm and the old house to a money-lender in León, who paid her half its value; then she sailed for Mexico. In Puebla, which lay four days from the sea, some people remembered the Conde de Estrada; he had died in a duel with daggers; his son had gone away. They mentioned San Luis Potosí and some said they thought the province of Sonora somewhere perhaps, God alone knew; the Conde had been reported to have a magnificent grant in the north. But who could say these things, in a country so vast that no one man could ever traverse it?

Señor Rafael, in name like an angel and in coun-

tenance like one, kneeling beside his mistress, the Señorita Carmen Gonzales, in her green and yellow, looked at an old woman praying at the altar-rail across the aisle from him. He was a sensitive, voluptuous as well as brave and reckless young man, and had already drifted away from the words on his lips to listen to his mistress' low voice muttering her prayers. It was like something within a guitar, how low, how sweet; it rose and fell; he risked his soul in hell as he had often done before for the sake of one more of those delights that she could give him. Looking at the old woman he forgot his prayers entirely and presently even the beautiful low voice at his side, and knelt there, his brow resting on his palm, his face turned to one side, watching her. The motionless body, its bowed shoulders and clasped hands seemed too frail to be alive. Her face was raised, her eyes resting on the altar. He must have thought that she was dead—she was so white—and that the soul was coming out of her eyes.

It all flashed back to him, the evening at Taxco, two months before, when she had first approached him, to ask permission to join his train

going north to San Antonio. Events had put her out of his mind; at Querétaro, Carmen had taken up with the bull-fighter, Octavio Garcia, people brought tales, Don Rafael was mad with jealousy; at Saltillo he had given her a beating, and at San Juan Bautista a three days' fiesta. Taxco now came back to him, as he looked at Doña Remedios. He had been at Taxco to the silver mines, where his family had holdings, under the management of their renowned cousin, José de la Borda, who out of the wealth drawn from the mountains there was building the great rose-colored cathedral in the Virgin's honor. Don Rafael loved the world he lived in. In Taxco—a town that was like the floor of a white cloud, with shafts and walls of light set up, blue, rose, pale green and lemon color—he was lingering on the high terrace of the church, watching the little market under the laurel trees in the square below, the men in their white clothes and wide-brimmed hats, the women with their rebozos over their heads, like the Venetian shawls that he had seen once on a voyage, the bright voices, the silence out over the valleys, the clouds moving down from the hills above the town. From the far

end of the terrace an old woman in black came up to him, speaking in a low, passionate voice that age had not touched and in the purest Castilian. She had heard that he was about to start to-morrow for San Antonio. All Taxco knew that his cousin was sending him to inquire into the reports of gold and silver in the northern province. She was searching for her son, who had been lost to her for more than thirty years. She had been to Puebla, to the provinces of Oaxaca, Michoacan and many other places, even to some of the sea-coast towns. He knew how that might be, she said. It was so large a country, the parts of it so cut off from one another, that wars might be fought in one province and peace made before another learned of it, and governments came and went and hundreds of towns and cities never knew of them. How could one not be lost? Her money was almost gone by now, but she had enough pesos for this journey perhaps.

Don Rafael thought her mad, but he would grant her request. "Señora," he replied, "you may come along. No question of pesos." Then he thought, "She may bring me luck, who knows?"

The silver and gold were in his mind. He hoped she would not die on the journey, but if she did, well, wandering ends where it ends, he would give her a decent burial, for the sake of his own mother, no, for the sake of all women. When they were young, women were like music behind the curtain of plain, dull things that men must engage in; and Carmen Gonzales was waiting for him at the inn.

The celebrated Father Francisco Mariana de los Dolores y Viana, of the mission nearby, had conducted mass in San Fernando that morning, and, even so long a while after, there were more people in church than usual; but at the great door into the Plaza of San Fernando now, Don Rafael touched her arm, "Forgive me, Señora, there was so much to distract me, trying to preserve the journey from misfortunes, that I have not remembered you as I should like."

"Oh, no, my dear Don Rafael," Doña Remedios said. "You must not say that. There were so many in your train."

"For a man even it was a terrible journey but for one of your years, Señora——"

"It was a happy journey, Señor. I owe you everything, everything."

"You owe me nothing, Señora. But they have taken me a large house here in the town; if you will honor me, I offer you a lodging there."

"That too? How kind you are, Señor."

"While you find your son, perhaps," he went, smiling and looking at the emeralds on the fingers of his left hand. "You must remember this is the town of San Antonio, who finds for us what is lost."

"I have found him, Don Rafael."

"Found your son?"

She could see he thought her out of her wits. "At least I know he is here."

"Then what is his name?" Don Rafael said gently. "We'll have him sent for."

"His name is Juan de Dios Estrada."

"Juan de Dios? Estrada? Very well. I am a stranger here of course and shouldn't know. Are you ill, Señora?"

"I have trouble at times getting my breath," she said, "but not at this moment."

Carmen Gonzales, a little in advance of them, rapped her fan on her flamingo palm and called to him.

"I'm coming," he said. "My house, Señora, is off there, it seems, only a step. They call it the House of the Shell."

She saw him stop, with Carmen Gonzales, to buy jasmines from a woman who sat, her black rebozo drawn up over her head, with a little jar on the ground beside her. Nearby, the melon vendor had spread out his goods, the sea green melons with their pale, soft leaves. On the far side of the Plaza of San Fernando there was a kind of market, with barrows set up, where she could see green vegetables and fruits, lengths of cloth for sale, and crockery set out on the ground. Peons, Indians, servants, housewives, and old men in shawls were moving about, calling out wares, conversing with one another; there were men who had come in from the ranches with wide sombreros and the high-heeled boots, brightly ornamented, that had survived from the days of the first conquistadores; and at one side, as if studying the town, stood a ragged group from some western settlement, fled from the Indian raids to this garrisoned city; their dogs wandered about among them, putting their noses to things. The rest of the plaza

was open at this hour. Doña Remedios stood looking at it. On the white stone of the pavement the bright light lay, like a breath quickly taken. A harp-player, with a beautiful grave head and white hair, stood back in the close noon shadow of the wall. She closed her eyes to listen, the melody was like a song, a voice in a song, singing forever; the lower strings seemed to her like the quick, sad beating of a heart.

The house that Don Rafael Vasco de Salazar had taken was that built by a nobleman who had been ordered back to Spain after certain letters he had written to the French king were intercepted by the archbishop's agents from Guadelajara. So far away was Spain that nobody in San Antonio knew what had happened to him. He had not returned and the house, with the magnificent furniture that he had brought with him, was unoccupied. It had been offered by the chamber of the Illustrious Cabildo to the great Borda for his cousin's use, what time he remained in the city. It was a great baroque house, with saffron yellow walls and pink eaves and moldings, and a shell copied from that at the Mission of San José over the

street portal, and stood in the same street with the Veramendi palace and the famous blue house of Juan Banul.

In the narrow room that the porter had led her to, across the patio and up a narrow stair to the rear of the house, Doña Remedios, having made her toilette with exquisite care, changing her linen and smoothing out her frayed dress—she no longer had any but the one—sat down at her window. She was busy with her thoughts. She had travelled so long through cities and provinces, riding when she could, then on foot, sleeping in convents, in the huts of the peons, in taverns and now and again on the ground, that the thought of meeting her son, the hope of meeting him, had made the meeting seem a reality. "There must be dignity," she said, "there must be form and dignity." She had said these things over a thousand times before, picturing herself and her son.

The malady from which Doña Remedios suffered consisted of a great difficulty at times in drawing the air into the lungs. The lungs would refuse either to contract or to expand. More than once she had almost died of it. As she sat there

by the window she remembered that she had eaten nothing all day but a piece of bread. She felt light in her body, unreal. But she knew she would not die. She believed that her son was coming.

And when he came? She closed her eyes and could see her father when she was a child and he still a young man. And when her son came? Until he came? She found herself remembering a poem of her father's which, years after his pen was laid away forever, he used to recite to his friends.

> Roses that lift their snowy eyelids,
> Green voices calling
> And a bell;
> And the returning wings
> To spring.
> Stay, summer, summer, come not yet—
> The bell is more than the church,
> The song than the nest,
> And the cry of desire
> More than all that follows.

The words of the poem came through her mind now, after so many years—what would it be like now when she found him?

The porter of the house knocked at the door. Thank God! But she would not cry out. She held

tight to the arms of the chair. "Come in," she said in a low voice. The door opened and admitted her visitor.

"I am Juan de Dios Ramirez Estrada, Señora," he said, making a grave bow, but she could see that the hand that held his hat was trembling slightly. "You asked for me, they say."

"My son, do I annoy you? For so long, I've been—" No, that was not what she meant. His eyes were the same. Sombre and arrogant. She would have known them. But not the rest. She looked at the white brow and temples, under the dark hair, the burn from the sun, the gray eyes, all Castilian, the Castilian red and white. He was tall like his father, a nail's breadth under six feet. But he was not like his father. Was he like his father's father, or his other grandfather, Don Enrique? Were they all one, these four men?

"My father told me that my mother died when I was born."

"Juan de Dios," she said, "I am Remedios Aragonés y Estrada, Condesa de Villanueva by my marriage to your father, Carlos. El Zurdo his family called him, because he was left-handed, as

his mother was before him, and as you were when you were a little boy, before he took you away."

"They called me that too, Zurdito," he said stepping farther into the room.

She saw that he did not, like Rafael de Salazar, take her for out of her wits. He had seen that she spoke the truth. He had his own brain, though he might not say what he thought.

"There was some delay," Juan de Dios went on, "I had just come in from the ranch."

She was looking at him closely, at his linen, his coat, his boots, his hair, and saw that he had made himself immaculate.

"You have so much land, Juan de Dios?"

"My father had a claim here and I have a new grant lately from the government," he said, as if to go on politely talking, "known as Cuatro Ciénegas. We are making some changes now." But she heard that vaguely except to note the beautiful Spanish that he spoke. There were things nearer to him that she must hear.

How unlike Rafael de Salazar he was!

Rafael was voluptuous, delicate, much of the woman in him; he needed women only for their

luxurious flesh or soft, babbling company. They were happy and easy with him, they could talk with him as to another woman. But Juan de Dios was the full complement of woman. He needed women, as the seed needs the earth, as the wave needs the water, as fire needs the substance, without knowing it almost. Doña Remedios had a proud sense of his strangeness, of the impossibility of any intimacy with him for any woman, no matter how closely they were bound together by their need for each other. But she knew how much a woman might love him. It was not happiness so much as the rapture and pain at the core of life. To the woman he was the mystery arising in her as the blood rose in her veins. He was solitary like the life in nature. And like nature, he was touched with death. To be loved; to be cared for.

Doña Remedios returned to her son's words, noting how remote he seemed, how proud, how vulnerable through that very pride. Through this pride he could be hurt, beaten or ruined. What enemies he must have! Let him be so; she was loyal to what he was.

"I have been here in this presidio of San An-

tonio de Béjar," he was saying, "almost ever since my father's death, that's seventeen years ago, Señora. My father and I were in Cuernavaca, in León, Taxco, Puebla, who knows where, he would always change. He is buried in Puebla."

He had not even told her that he believed she was his mother, and yet was telling her about himself and about his father, speaking as if out of some noblesse oblige.

"I was once in Puebla," she said.

"What a long road you endured, Señora," he said, it seemed to her quickly, as if enough had been said on the subject, "all this way. And yet you survived."

There was a silence, he had in fact said very little.

"We started from Taxco," she said. "Rafael de Salazar graciously offered to lodge me in his house."

She saw him looking scornfully about at the apartment offered to his mother, but he made no reply.

"But you have said nothing of your family, Juan de Dios, are you married?"

"I am married," he replied coldly, averting his eyes.

"You have children."

"I have been married less than a year. My wife is scarcely twenty. For eleven days now we have not seen each other. She does not approve of what I have done lately."

"You don't want to speak of it?"

"It will do no good, Señora."

Half an hour after her son had gone, having kissed her hand but without speaking of seeing her again or anything of the sort, the servant came to say that the carriage of Juan de Dios was waiting in the patio, and that the apartment of the Condesa de Villanueva was ready. At Juan de Dios' house she was informed that he had been obliged to return to Cuatro Ciénegas. His wife was not present to welcome her husband's mother and Doña Remedios was shown to her room by the servants.

During the night Doña Remedios had an attack of her malady and almost died. For months these attacks had been worse when they came; sometimes her lungs seemed to close entirely against the

air and refused to let her draw her breath. Her son had left his apologies with old Juanita, who was assigned to serve his mother; and Doña Remedios, alone, long after she had sent the servant to bed, lay back on her pillows with her eyes open, fighting for breath and staring at the enormous room with its whitewashed walls, its floor of square bricks and great deep-set window, flanked with shutters of carved oak. After a little now the attack passed, and she lay in the darkness with her hand over her mouth, in consternation at the thought of how nearly she had come to frustration at the very moment she had so waited for, and knowing she could not have much longer to live.

She did not mind the thought. It was not necessary that her son and herself become intimate, inquiring into little events gone by, learning each other's confidences. He was not the sort for that, and she too had forgotten such ways, so long had she been alone, seeing the land, the water, the forests and the sky, living in the force of her hope as they lived in the force of their diverse natures. He was in some difficulty and stress now, with life, with the affairs of his property, with the young

wife, whom she had not yet seen. In the midst of this world of his passions, his decisions, his character, he moved alone. All these passions, traits and impulses had a certain high pure quality because he entertained them for themselves and sought to feed his nature with them; he was not a man of tricks and oblique policy.

She clasped her hands to her breast——

He was like a child, helpless, born thus into this world of his soul.

Once during those months before he was born, her body had stood between him and the physical world, tempering its laws for him, nourishing the life of his little body, and when he was born, had stood between him and the world, for so long as he needed it. Once she had given him her body, now she would give him her soul. She would feed the life of his soul. She would put her soul between his soul and the world.

This idea, long habitual with her as she wondered about the necessity that led her on this search, now became the whole of her mind. She was absorbed with her thoughts. The birth into the light of day did not mean that the child was one

with his mother; on the contrary, they were two beings separated. In the same way now she and her son need not become one in spirit. No, whatever we might desire, they were two spirits. Well, that fact changed nothing; it was a part of the strange, divine loneliness——

"I will find out what this trouble is," she said, coming out into words, "on his land. And I will talk with his wife." She turned these things over and over, feeling in the room about her the misty walls and shadows, and outside, the profound glory of the night, and lay with these thoughts for a long time, falling asleep at last only at daybreak and waking almost immediately. From the window she saw the stars fading out of the sky, and when they were gone, heard, from the convents and churches and the missions here and there across the fields to the south, the bells, they were like stars coming out on the air.

She heard the bells ringing nearby at San Antonio de Vejar o Valero, at San José farther off, and the sharp bells of San Juan de Capistrano, and die one by one away; and very soon after, the street cries of the dawn begin, shrill boys driving

donkeys, a man with a load of charcoal and mesquite wood, and the sounds of the market plaza stirring. In the midst of it she heard, all of a sudden and nearer, a muttering of voices and saw, when she rose and went to the window, a group of peons standing close together by the gate. Then she saw Juan de Dios riding out through the corral, with its wall of cedar posts, and up to the men. She saw him speaking to the peons, who appeared to be sullen and rebellious, only one of them stepping out to answer him; then his hand went out and she saw him slash the neck of this peon with his riding whip. You could hear the swish of the whip. Doña Remedios drew back from the window and closed her eyes.

All that day old Juanita was in and out of Doña Remedios' room, and toward evening, when the light was fading into a soft glow, she brought with her a platter of olives which she was cutting up into tiny dice. In the afternoon she often had to do the work of Maria Lucena, the cook. She set a stool stretched with bull's hide near the door and took her seat, looking now and then at the sick woman and saying not a word.

"Juanita," said Doña Remedios, suddenly without opening her eyes, "you must tell me, what is the trouble."

"Señora, you must taste the wine I put there for you. Don Juan said you were to have a caraffe of it. It goes to every part of Spain, Señora, where they call it Mission Wine, what a flavor, everyone says."

"You are not answering me. You saw what happened at the corral this morning."

"I didn't see it, but Transito, my husband, Señora, told me."

"You are not answering me."

"No, Doña Remedios."

"What is the trouble?"

The old servant set her platter on the floor beside her and got up and closed the door, then went to the foot of the bed.

"Don Juan has a grant from the Viceroy at Monterey, Señora. He wants to turn it into grazing land for sheep, they say there may be mines too. He is moving the peons to some land of his on the Brazos."

"And they resist?"

"They have been on this land a long time. They are poor people, Doña Remedios."

"And what do you think?"

"Transito and I keep our mouths shut, Señora."

"I don't know anything," Doña Remedios said. "I've not been out of this room."

"It would do no good, Señora, this house is as dumb as a tomb, without a master, without a mistress. Doña Santa has not given an order for ten days. I don't believe she has left her room, Doña Remedios."

"What does she think?"

"All I know is that she sides with the peons, Señora. But then you see—but perhaps I shouldn't say that——"

"Go on, pray."

"You see, Doña Remedios, the Señora's father, asking your forgiveness, was a peon himself. It was only that she was more beautiful than anyone."

"She is against Juan de Dios?" Doña Remedios said, disguising any surprise she may have felt, she saw old Juanita looking closely at her.

"I don't know what she said, Señora, all I know

is what Transito told me. One night at supper, soon after the trouble began, Don Juan rose from the table and went out without so much as howdy do, saddled his horse and rode away and didn't come back, not till next day."

You need not leave your room to feel the state of things in a house; and Doña Remedios knew how it was at Las Palombas. From the window she saw some servant now and then go quietly about the patio, the corral, the stable, or leaning against the wall in the sun. Sometimes there were peons coming from the hacienda. But the place was mute; and all day in the hot, white sun there was only a sense of a shadow moving across some bright patch now and then, and of some strange suspension in the air.

The day passed and the night, and her second morning at Las Palombas came without any word of her son's return. Doña Remedios told Juanita that she wished to be conducted to her daughter-in-law. The old servant, without a word, went and opened the door and stood waiting. Leaning on Juanita's arm, Doña Remedios crossed slowly the length of the house, along the shaded arcade, till

she reached Santa's door. Then she waited and let the maid go on.

"Will you say that Don Juan's mother would like to visit her?"

"The Señorita's door has been left always open lately," she replied, but did not seem to wish to say any more.

Doña Remedios waited.

"Doña Santa is asleep," Juanita said, coming back to the door in a moment.

Doña Remedios went softly into the room. She stood looking at the face on the pillow and pressed her hands to her breast. The slight, lovely body with its head on the pillow lay heavy with the sleep of exhaustion. She saw the dark hair, the face with its pale olive, delicate skin, the straight brow, the nostrils and chin, the delicate mouth touched with pain. It was a child's face. It was a face that might have been a great dancer's or some actress' in the theatre.

Doña Remedios, realizing all of a sudden the servant's shadow in the door, dismissed her with a vague gesture and stood there still by the bed, not making a sound. Once the dark eyes opened

but they saw nothing and closed again, and the lips quivered, but sleep returned. With beauty like that, a woman could have men following her, men of all sorts, rich men trailing after to give her everything she sighed for, but she loved Juan de Dios. Doña Remedios, as she looked at this face, could see that, and she wondered at love and what love is.

A little later, as she stood supporting herself against the balustrade in the gallery outside, she told herself that she had been mistaken in dismissing the servant and that she could not get back to her room without help. The stone of the friendly balustrade was warm from the sun but the shaded side of the column nearby was cool against her brow.

Juan de Dios's house stood at one end of the town, a little apart, and was built like the country haciendas: a long line of rooms connected by a gallery or arcade that ran in front of them and closed with a kind of wing at either end. At the rear of this rambling old house there was a little patio where the kitchen was, the blacksmith shop, storerooms, and servants' quarters. This patio was filled

with wagons and carts, a chicken coop at one end, the dog's house, bird cages, strings of dried chile, and herbs. Doña Remedios from where she stood, however, saw only the quiet shadowed gallery, the shining of the sun on the courtyard with its oleanders, jasmines, and yucca plants, the immaculate space of the whitewashed walls quivering under the light of the sky, which stretched overhead, blue and spotless, without a cloud, only the light freshness of the breeze from the south. The cicadas had come, in the trees and the grass, with their dry shrill song, as if summer were at hand. There was a smell of cedarwood burning in the kitchen and the soft heavy fragrance of the jasmine and oleanders in the sun. It was ten o'clock in the morning.

Off to the south and west she could see the country, the hills violet and gray, faint, strangely transparent and at the same time clear and final in their long lines. "I shall not see them again," Doña Remedios said, feeling at the same moment a quiet peace passing into her body, a sense of how short life is and happy. The doves, from which the place had taken its name, were calling here and there in the fields. She could hear them at intervals, some-

times far off, sometimes near, like the voice of that sweet, sad land. She closed her eyes, standing there in her son's house, and listened.

Juan de Dios coming in long after twelve that night heard, as he went along the gallery, his mother calling him. Her door was open. She lay on the bed, a silver lamp that he had bought at San Juan Bautista was burning on the little table. She was speaking to him.

"Juan de Dios, you are late. Last night you never came back to your house at all."

"I was at Cuatro Ciénegas," he said.

He bowed to kiss her hand, making an apology for the dust spattered over his clothes. She saw the pallor of his face, he was worn out with fatigue.

"But why are you still dressed? Did Juanita neglect you?" he asked, in an angry voice.

"Juanita, no, I dismissed her," Doña Remedios said, "I wanted to wait and see you, Juan de Dios."

"I'm here, Señora."

"Tell me, what is the trouble you are in? Tell me, Juan."

"Nothing. Nothing," he said.

"On the ranch?"

"Not on the ranch. On that new grant, the tract they call Cuatro Ciénegas. I will tell you. This land must be turned right off into pasture for cattle. If there's silver there I mean to have no peons on hand to steal it. I have turned them out."

"They have been on the land a long time?"

"Who can know that? It's two hundred years since Coronado came this way with his troop. Yes, two hundred years and more. And since then many others."

"You drive the peons out into the road?"

"I would have transferred them to the ranch, settled them there. But not now, no, by God, not after that rebellion. They can get out."

"They've had the land a long time," Doña Remedios said, simply.

"I'll have their leaders flogged with ramrods to-morrow, we'll see. They can get out."

"Go starve?"

"They're no better than dogs, why not?"

"And who will you get to work for you?"

"I can get that, be sure. I can hire the Indians from the missions, that's what Don Carlos de Franquis did, the Governor, only he forced the monks

to let him have them. That was the lawsuit they took to the Viceroy, and then to the Council of the Indies and the King."

"And your wife sides with them?"

"It's late. I must go, Mother. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Doesn't she?"

"Yes."

"And that's what's eating your heart out. That's what's making you so hard, Juan de Dios? Because you——"

"The peons threaten to appeal to the Viceroy. I'll show them what."

"Because you love her so much."

"I'll show them all."

A spasm of pain went through her body. She thought of the birth-pangs she had known, and wanted now to cry out again. But she would not have him know that she was dying. She would not break him down with that, working on his sympathy. No. The force must come from him. The pain lessened and she laid her hands quietly down at her sides.

Juan de Dios was not looking at her, his frown-

ing eyes were fixed on the floor, and Doña Remedios, without moving her gaze from his face, began presently to speak.

"My son, you are not good. Perhaps I should not blame you and I don't. I know so little of your life but I know you have been alone and that you have set yourself against the rest of the world. And now you are holding out like this; you deny what you have, you poison your soul, Juan de Dios. You don't let yourself give in, you won't let yourself give in and go to that girl who loves you, and say—Go to her, Juan de Dios."

"You'll forgive me, Señora, I have never had the habit of discussing myself with anyone," he said, coldly.

"And so may God pity you," she said, gently. "Will you do me a favor, Juan de Dios?"

"If I can."

"Bring that seat by me here and sit down." She was afraid that in her weakness she would not be able much longer to make him hear her.

He drew up the seat Juanita had had to a place beside her bed and she began speaking to him again. He listened silently as she talked on. What

she said was not very clear to her, but she herself knew what it was she seemed to be talking to. It was the little ghost that she had seen coming to her so many times down the garden walk at Montesclaros, or out of the shadows of her great empty room there, or standing in the altar smoke and candlelight of the mass in chapels that she had visited in her wandering—a little boy of five, always with his hands held out to her, calling her with those little lips that she had fed at her breasts, holding out those little arms that had been around her neck, and she talking baby-talk to him, saying the wise sweet things she had in her heart. She knew that it was changed now. This was not a baby any more, this was a man whose soul her soul must feed.

For a long time Doña Remedios talked to her son, sometimes very slowly, for the pain came and went. Then she felt it growing worse and tightened her lips; she could feel the cold coming up her legs, past her knees, and something terrible creeping at her throat. She was afraid he would see it and found a pretext for moving him farther away from her.

"Will you snuff the lamp, Juan de Dios?" she said. "You see how it gutters. It's so late the oil is all gone."

He rose and went to snuff the lamp, which went out under his hands.

"Look at that," he said, annoyed at his clumsiness.

She was glad of the darkness around her bed, though the light from the sky outside the window shone in the room.

Juan de Dios came back and stood by the bed. From the shadows of the bed Doña Remedios, looking up at him, could see his face, he looked very tall.

"Juan de Dios," she said presently, in a low voice.

"Yes."

"Will you do it? You will go to her and then everything will settle itself?"

He said nothing.

"Will you do as I ask you?"

Again nothing.

"Juan de Dios?"

"Yes, I will do it," he said, after a silence and not moving.

"Thank God!"

He was not looking at her, not bending toward her, but stood there straight, with his hands clenched. This was his way, he was proud, this was his nature. She was loyal to him: "I am glad," she thought. "I would not have him different."

She saw him walk over to the window and stand looking out. She knew that what he was thinking was something he would never speak of, never to anyone. She raised her head slightly off the pillow to look at him and saw also, beyond him, the fields and the night sky. She would be quiet, the land was quiet.

Then she closed her eyes for what she knew would be the last time. "He leadeth me beside still waters"; then she could hear Don Felipe Herrera and Don Andrés de Segura talking with her father long ago. It was Don Andrés. She could not quite make out all he was saying but it was something where Plato said that there is a law that the paths of darkness beneath the earth shall never again be trodden by those who have set their feet on the heavenward road of love, but that walking hand in hand——

Then she heard nothing at all.

Juan de Dios stood at the window looking out, not moving. In the mesquite trees, faint like clouds against the pale ground, he could hear the soft wind moving like the tide; he saw the garden walls, the corral, the houses of the town, in the quiet light; beyond them he saw the road going off into the country, and the stars moving along the hills.

ASSISI FARMER

ASSISI FARMER

FROM where I stand I can see him coming down the path from the fields above. On one hand he has the stream bank that follows the slight line of the water, in this season of summer almost dry; on the other, planted among the olive trees, the wheat, now yellow toward the harvest. At the bottom of the slope the stream circles into a pool, with green poplars beyond and trees with young pears, and the tiles, half hidden, of the farmhouse roof. Another path borders the fields where the land stretches out into a long level with vines and the elms they hang upon, and wheat again, filled thick with poppies. At the crossing of the paths stands a shrine, a square pillar plastered white. A little roof of tiles covers the top of the shrine and not far down is a niche, painted blue with gold stars. In it is a little statue of the Virgin, white and blue, with stars about her head.

The sun has sunk, the late golden light fills the air and sifts through the olive trees and gleams on

the white shrine. The bells from San Francisco far away in Assisi come down over the serene land. Sounds can be heard now from the kitchen of the farmhouse, and presently a woman begins to sing, in a stone room, you can tell by a kind of completeness of volume in the tone. Her voice has an odd double quality, something of the sweetness of light and the tang of metal.

The man is tall and brown; he is young, not yet thirty. Three-quarters of the way to the foot of the slope he stops and turns and looks back up the hill. Then he turns again and stands looking for a long time out over the fields. Then he goes back and breaks a white-flowered branch from an olive tree and a handful of poppies growing underneath and lays them at the shrine.

The light, the olive boughs, the wheat, the abundance and verdure are reflected within him as they are in the water of the pool. Love and thankfulness fill his heart. But he is not abstract; and it would not satisfy him, even if he could, to hold in some memory or system of thought or state of mind, what he feels. He needs some one to offer it to; and he needs to do some visible act that he can

see as a result of the thing in him. And in what he does, the labor, the plenty, the rest and peace, reach their completeness and fruition and are made clear; his day takes its natural place in the world. For him the idea and the body, or creation, appear as one, in the same way as that in which the progress and life in nature there around him may relieve and express itself in the ripening grain, the flowers, the fruit, and the evening light under the trees.

THE LIGHT ON THE HILLS

We had left the wide hall where the last diners were still at their coffee, and had come out on to the deserted terrace. The sound of the orchestra indoors, with the clarinet, the horns and violins, poured out on the soft, friendly air of the summer just begun. They were playing the music of some old opera, of little importance or meaning but rich, minor, full of voices—music made to lose yourself in. There was an effect that I have long noticed when I hear such music, of waves and water around me. It was not waves as any regular rhythm, coming and going, repeated and repeated; it was the sense of being carried on in a flood of life, sad as memory, full, plaintive, dreamlike and happy.

I was sitting there in the early darkness, half listening to the orchestra and thinking of this motion of life in music. Some full, passionate, tender progression—the life in us seemed to be that. The lawns outside and the country beyond, the leaves

and movement of the trees, the mild air, these also, I thought, were gathered up in music. And then, presently, I found myself looking at Shelton, in the chair near mine.

Now and then in New York some artist who wished to monopolize the more soulful effects for himself said that Shelton looked like some of the doges' portraits, meaning the clear drawing about the nose, which was long and in many people's eyes supercilious, and the distinct, logical, clear focus of the eyes. Nobody could deny that Venetian walls show many a noble face that, once you think of it, might be watching you through Shelton's eyes, so much the artist was right about. When Shelton looked at you, you looked back; when he looked at something else, you thought he saw exactly what there was to see about it. When he started anywhere, you thought he knew precisely his direction. All this, however, might easily be misleading, I knew. If I had never talked hours on end with him, as we do with some of our friends, I had at least known him a long time and I had looked at him. The mouth, the changing light in the eyes, the warm, ironic and suddenly

friendly voice, were to be counted into the sum of him. I was sure that with him sometimes, very much more than with most people, the soul of another—what beautiful, lonely essence this other being needs and gives—seemed to be apart from its body and to exist to itself. Even after death, it could move still in the world. He saw it as an image or reality, as we might feel a body of sound that departs from the instruments and becomes a presence in the room. And to this image was drawn his pity or devotion, his curious poetry. I had put all that down in my note-book, thinking some day to try him in a book. In New York he had some sort of editing work, not starvation for a bachelor but not rich.

We talked for a while, only a little, neither of us said anything he was thinking about, and then sat smoking our cigarettes in silence.

"I wish," Shelton said, speaking up suddenly like that, "I wish I thought there was some way the dead could know what we think of them. If we could only believe enough in immortality to think that they—I mean if I could say to one, 'Now that I've got some sense I see how fine you

were,' or 'You were always patient and good and, by God, I see now what that means!' Or, 'We understand how you never got what you wanted, how you never—' " He turned to me, 'Oh, well, it's obvious, of course, what I mean."

"Yes, it's obvious, but," I said, "no harm in that."

It was obvious what he meant but not obvious why he said it. If I had made such an observation, my excuse would have been the music, so old-fashioned, high-horse, and plaintive. But I said nothing of that. Shelton would know that music is not the cause of what we feel or do, but is the secret—our explanation, our hidden, inmost life; that was just the sort of thing he did know.

Presently a boy in green livery came out calling Shelton's name and brought him a telegram. He read it by his Dunhill lighter. Then he relit the Dunhill and read the message over, and I could see his face looking freshly pleased with the world. He put the telegram in his pocket and sat rubbing his hands together the way he had, putting the fingers of one hand over those of the other, as Chinese actors do.

"You'll excuse me, I've got to send one of your damned telegrams," he said presently, and went indoors.

Later on I saw him far down at the end of the hotel garden, not going for a walk or anywhere, but only walking back and forth. In the starlight and the glow from the hotel lights, which spread far out over the lawns, I could see his shadow, turning up and down the path. I sat a long time and when I went upstairs to bed, he was still there.

Next afternoon Shelton and I went for a walk together. We had turned off into one of those casual, friendly roads that wander over Connecticut, along through the country to some farm or busy highway, and were swinging along in our two private orbits when he suddenly began talking.

"You know," he said, "I came up country—Southern style, I'm still uncomfortable getting up leaving anybody without an excuse, without saying I'm going to so and so's, or I must do this or must do that. Some explanation of why I'm leaving—even if it's a little lie."

"No matter at all. In these parts an air of mystery will make you seem all the more important,"

I said, meaning one of the diverse ways of getting heard of nowadays.

He smiled and made a gesture of dismissing that point.

"The telegram last night was about some money for singing lessons, not me, no, a little cousin. I've never seen her but once and her name's not even Shelton, though her great-great-grandfather was my great-grandfather, in our family that's close kin. But neither is that the reason I'm interested in this young creature's having singing lessons, which I'll explain in a minute. You know how many of these foundations there are in the United States, millions coming in every year to be spent worthily, and a lot of trouble it is too to get it spent. Well, lately a friend of mine has become a trustee of one of these beneficent affairs, with more income than a duchy. At some speak-easy last week where I was dining with him in the utmost luxury—what with your mound of caviar, your pastries with sweetbreads in them, your 1915 perfect Burgundy, and your feeling that the world was all plenty, rich sauces and Russian singing. But the singing was a mistake, I reckon, wild and unforgettable like that,

for in the midst of it I became a poor dinner guest. I felt a desire to call out to life, to be carried into it, to call to the dead. Nice business for a party. And then in the midst of that, in the ironical way we do, I had a practical turn and was more sociable again: well, I thought to myself, why not let some of this money go to the little cousin of mine about whom, along with other matters, my Uncle Alexander had written me only lately. He said, in one line, that the darkies were stealing his melons as fast as they ripened, and in the next that one of the young cousins had sung at the church concert—shame she had a poor school-teacher for a father and had to work in an office—mighty sweet voice, like her grandmother's. Your cousin Lucy Carroll, he said."

"Ages ago?" I said.

"Ages ago. She's been dead over thirty years. I saw this child once, that my uncle wrote about, two summers ago, when she was sixteen, with her face like a picture, but I didn't hear her sing. The reason I'm so interested is because of her grandmother, my Couisin Lucy, it's for her sake."

He paused and stopped to light a cigarette.

I was watching him and thinking how I had heard an Italian lady say once of some man or other, an American friend, that he was often silent but when he did speak *c'è un diluvio*—there was a flood of it. I would just walk along by Shelton, then, and let him go on.

"When I knew my Cousin Lucy she was already pale and fragile looking. She was still in her twenties, I reckon, but when we are seven that seems an old woman, you know how it is. There were three children and we used to play together. Sometimes at their house on summer afternoons when it was too hot even under the trees, we went into the front room, where the piano was, and Cousin Lucy would put down the sewing she seemed forever busy with and tease us, laughing a great deal.

"And always when I got home my mother would ask how my Cousin Lucy was to-day and if she had sung for us, and would say, 'when Lucy was a girl she had a voice like a bird.' After she had said this my mother would always sigh."

"And the songs?" I asked. "*In the Gloaming* was one, my ladies had all sung that in their time. Uncle Alexander sang *The Miller's Big Dog*, but

The Miller's Big Dog was considered less suitable for ladies' voices."

"*In the Gloaming, O My Darling*—and *Juanita* was another, and *I'll Give to You a Paper of Pins.* You know how it goes—if you will marry me, me, me. And when that was over, we put a sheet of music between the piano strings and Cousin Lucy played jigs and *Little Brown Jug, How I Love You,* and we laughed because you couldn't tell it from a banjo. Cousin Edward was never at home this time of day. All the while there was a pile of tea-cakes for us, in a silver basket with grapes and leaves around it and a handle like a grape-vine. In the dining-room there was a great silver castor, with flowery filigree on the bottles; the place, the few rooms there were to it, was full of silver that had come from her father's house. And in a heavy old mahogany secretary that had belonged to my great-grandfather and that blocked Cousin Lucy's closet door so that you could never get it more than two-thirds open, there was a chipped lacquer box full of old jewels. We took it out sometimes to try the pieces on: enormous gold brooches made up of leaves, coils, lilies or broken classic columns,

and cameo brooches and earrings, plaited hair chains with gold tassels, bracelets, seals, and rings, best of all the ring with the square ruby.

"The next year we went to live in Baton Rouge and I saw nothing more of my cousins till I was fourteen, when, after those six years away, I was sent back to Beauregard, which was the name of our little family town, to visit my uncle; it was June and school had closed. At that time Cousin Edward's family were living in the country, and my uncle and I drove out in the surrey one day to see them, half an hour's visit. I never saw Cousin Lucy after that. But my mother's tears when the news came of her death, and her talking so much about Cousin Lucy have always made me feel that I too knew her and remember her far better than I do, of course; and it's made her whole life seem open before me like a history."

The story that Shelton told me was one of those things that happen in the provinces, where there is nothing to divert a life from fulfilling itself. You can watch it, as if from the outside, develop its course to the end. In a city there would have been distractions, things to cut into her living, scattering

its attention and outline. But Cousin Lucy, there in the country, must have seen her life, like a flower held up before her eyes, seen it come to the full, and then dwindle and go out.

Brandon, where Cousin Lucy grew up, was a great plantation house on Bayou Teche. The banks of the sleepy stream were grown with live-oaks, from which the long moss hung down and was reflected in the water. There were seven halls to the house. The curtains, the furniture, and china were French, by way of New Orleans; and in the garden there was an avenue of statues alternating with clipped box, shaped like columns, and a pond with a marble nymph and two dolphins at her feet, sunk in water-hyacinths. During the Civil War she was a child, of course, almost a baby, but after the war Cousin Lucy lived on at Brandon, where for a while, as if ruin were not on everything, life was pretty much the same as it had always been. There was a governess until she was twelve, and after that no more studies; she was taught singing by an old master who came out on the bayou steamboat every fortnight to give lessons to the young ladies in the neighborhood.

The summer Cousin Lucy was sixteen, young Mr. Edward Carroll came home from his Kentucky college for vacation. He was a very handsome young man, this Cousin Edward of Shelton's, with long gray eyes and black hair, a straight nose and fine mouth. He had white teeth, and when he spoke, a low, persuasive voice. The Carrolls were one of the four or five best families in that country, they had come to Louisiana from Maryland. He was twenty at the time Cousin Lucy and he met thus again, when they were no longer children on neighboring plantations, and fell in love. The following summer Cousin Edward was obliged to abandon his studies at the end of his third year, because there was no more money after the plantation left by his father had been sold to pay up an old mortgage. He had now to go to work and make his own living; and since his family was prominent in those parts, they took him into the bank. Her father wanted to give them a house in town that belonged to him, but this the young husband refused. He would provide his wife a home, however small it might be. They went to live in a four-room cottage, which he intended, in a short time,

to enlarge. He kept up his pride by this, but in a way it was a pity, for that year, Cousin Lucy's father died, the house in town was sold along with the Brandon plantation, what part of it had not already been sold off or mortgaged, to pay up his debts and balance his account with his cotton factor in New Orleans. The class of whites who bought the plantation had no need for such a house and no such ideas of living. Brandon was closed, the furnishings, save for a few pieces that Cousin Lucy and her brother in Mobile could house, were scattered, and before long nobody knew just what had become of them. "Where do you suppose those curtains from the parlor went, that blue damask?" Shelton's mother used to say, "Or all those tester beds?" People forgot such things had ever been at Brandon.

And so there was nothing left by way of an income for Cousin Lucy but the quarter section of land a few miles out of town, which yielded next to nothing, and the clerk's salary in the bank.

And then one fine day, a few weeks before their first child was born, Cousin Edward came home with the announcement that he had walked

out of the bank. The president had criticised the manner in which he filled his position, and had asked whether it was not possible to keep the ledgers up-to-date, they were sometimes a day behind. After all, a man's honor and self-respect must come first; against these no other considerations could weigh an iota. Cousin Lucy saw that, and kept her frightened anxiety to herself; there were, as he told the president of the bank, plenty of other positions, though she would have hated to try and say what they would be in that small town. She was in love with her young husband, but even by now she must have seen what was going to happen, and how one place after another, out of the few openings there were, most of them bookkeeping for the merchants, would after a few months, perhaps a year, be thrown up in a huff, which was, indeed, as it turned out. And she must have seen how she would have to defend this pride even against him, when in his later reflections he might himself sometimes question his having been entirely in the right; for it was clear that this pride was at the centre of his whole nature. A coarser woman might not have seen all this so well, and might have been the better off, who knows?

He was not bad, only dull and very proud. Saying that, however, does not finish the matter. That aquiline, small head, so distinguished, with its pale olive skin, its gray eyes so changeable and yet so fixed and haughty, its fine lips, the voice so persuasive and full of impulse, and that supple body with its natural elegance, these could not be dismissed so easily as mere dullness and pride, they were too much haunted by the ghost of the beautiful, too full of some strange, brave evocation. Whatever else he might be, she must have seen him only as her beloved. And as for her— Seeing her as every child does his elders, grown up and old, and after she was all pale and worn, you could not believe what they said about her as a girl, but you knew, the moment you saw her granddaughter, that it was true. As for Cousin Lucy, she had a face lovely as a rose, but bright and lively, a little sad, and very sweet about the mouth and eyes.

And yet we must say that there was something very Southern about the whole situation, and especially the South of that time; this terrible pride and narrow honor, this evasion and denial of common sense, this elegance and loveliness, this pas-

sionate romance and loyalty, this endurance that is like some fatalism in the heart or some despair and indifference in the mind, this echo of old, high things passing from the world; and around these two figures, the ruin and improvidence and change, the struggle and defeat; and meanwhile life, forever renewed, going on and to be lived.

It was during this first vacation, shall we say, from business, that Cousin Edward developed his inability to get out of bed immediately after waking, it gave him a headache. Cousin Lucy got up, therefore, and made the fire. After a while he began to have his coffee in bed. Two more children followed, with not much more than a year between them. The house had never had any more rooms added to it, and never would have; there were still only the four rooms, one of them the kitchen. The children as they grew up were often an unendurable strain on their father's nerves; he was harsh with them. Once when John, the oldest boy, dropped the silver tray that his mother had sent by him and spilled the coffee, Cousin Edward leapt out of bed and beat him with the hearth-broom handle till there were welts across his back

and legs; and Cousin Lucy had to stay a long time with him, out behind the kitchen wall where the pear tree was, explaining to him that his father loved him but was not very well, he must always try to consider his father, and then, after the boy had gone back to his play and she was alone, trying within herself to keep these two things separate, the love she felt for her husband and the mystery of this suffering child.

During these earlier years there was one servant, old Becky, who had been Cousin Lucy's black mammy and stuck to her through thick and thin. If not much money was coming in, Cousin Edward insisted on a good table, and then raged at the bills that came from the grocer's. When old Aunt Becky died Cousin Lucy did the cooking. She never complained of her lot to anyone, and people wondered at her devotion to her husband, who loved her too, in his own way. Once, when there was a discussion of love and marriage, she said, "I'd marry Edward again. But if it doesn't catch you, don't go looking for love." That was the only thing of the kind that Shelton's mother had ever heard her say.

The singing lessons that had left off at her marriage never began again; but after a while she gave music lessons. Four or five children came in the afternoons, when school was over, to play their little pieces on the cracked old piano that used to be at Brandon. To a peddler who went through the country buying and exchanging jewelry she sold some of her pieces by weight, some she exchanged so that her daughters might have the modern things they wanted. Then, when the two girls were big enough to help in the kitchen, she started to sew a little for cousins and friends, but soon took in sewing openly, and when the strain of cutting and fitting was too much for her, came at last to making sunbonnets for negroes. You bought the cambric, pink or blue, and the crash to line it with, made the bonnets and sold them to the negroes for seventy-five cents. We can imagine some of these negro women sniffing at the bonnet, holding it up —"Well, I reckin I'll take it"—getting even that way for some of the things they had to stand from white folks. That was what she came to.

By this time Cousin Lucy's face was white and pinched. She was thirty-five when her fourth child

was born, ten years after the last. Here the story turns sordid. When the child was born, they said, it was Cousin Edward went on more than she did, walking about groaning and crying in the next room; and when they took him in later to see her and his child, Cousin Lucy, during the whole time he was in the room, lay there without a word, her eyes full of contempt. She failed to recover her strength as she should; red showed in her cheeks, and a cough appeared, and the family doctor, who was devoted to her and saw what was happening, advised, for lack of anything else to say, perhaps, the country—as if Beauregard and the country were any different—and they went to live in a still smaller house standing on her land. Cousin Edward, who had tried a travelling agency for some New Orleans hardware company—a sort of drumming, as it was called, though he never allowed his activities to be called so—and found it overtaxing his strength, now went to farming. He could not get on with the trifling field-hands and so had little success that fall. Before the cotton was through picking, they moved back to town. She was almost thirty-seven then. Whatever love she

may have felt for him, passionate, brave, and lovely at the first, and afterward full, constant, as expressing the need of her own soul to love and to give; however she may have shielded and excused and borne with him; she now at last turned on him bitterly. During her illness those last few months, he did not nurse her but left that to friends, he must live, he said, for the sake of his children. She lay in their old bed in the morning and scolded at him when he appeared from the front room where he slept; he could look out for himself, for all she cared, as long as he let her alone. Then she turned her head on her pillow, too weak for anything else. If she could have gone on loving him it would have been something at least, but she did not. So that even that was taken from her. On her death certificate the old doctor wrote: "Died of child-bearing and overwork."

"I have a letter from Cousin Lucy put away somewhere," Shelton said, presently, some time after he had finished telling me her story. "When I got home, after the visit to my uncle that summer, the time we drove out to see her, I found an old song album, and I sent it to her. She wrote

thanking me. It was when they were living in the country that she wrote me the letter. There's a place in it I've always remembered. I don't know why, but for some reason I've always remembered it: 'They are burning the brush, getting ready to plow. The smoke is rising out there in the fields, and at night you can see the fires a long way off.' "

He was still trying to explain:

"It's curious to think how words, once set free like that, go on living, long after the writer is dead and done with."

"It mixes us up about what death is," I said, by way of making some sort of answer. But I understood. I thought of the note I had made about him, how he felt the soul of another—what beautiful, lovely essence this other being needs and gives. For him the thought of this woman, dead so long ago, was like a presence in the room.

He went on:

"She had such a rotten deal, I'd just like to be able to believe she could see now at last that, if she couldn't have what she dreamed, this child can have it. I don't mean any sentimental business about its all coming out right in the end. Cousin

Lucy's case, for example. No such stuff as that. But at any rate I'd like to think that in the general sum of it, life evens up. I like to think of life as a sum, like the water in the world, and that by and large it evens up. Pleases me to think so, anyhow. At least that."

He lit a cigarette. "At least that," he said again.

We had come to a spot where the road began to descend and were not likely to go much farther. It was the hour of the day when the sun has set but the sky shines; the few soft clouds that there were, heavier on their lower rims, lay close to the horizon. The whole vault of the sky seemed to rest on light. Below us we could see the country stretching far away, the light distributed on the high fields here and there and along the slopes and ridges of the valley. Shelton and I stood looking at the scene. The light of the sun on the earth, spread out, coming in due time everywhere, distributed sooner or later over the world, over this country here before us——

It exactly expressed what Shelton had meant about life; and he must have stood there with that

feeling, strangely happy and longed for, that we have sometimes of finding in nature the image and proof of our thoughts. But to mention it would have seemed to him merely banal, and presently we turned to go home.

"After all," he said, "if the singing itself never comes to much, what difference?"

COWBOY AT THE ANTIQUE SHOP WINDOW

COWBOY AT THE ANTIQUE SHOP WINDOW

He is medium height not tall; what strikes you about his shoulders is their line outward and down, the flatness of the back and the even chest between them, rather than any mediocrity of size; he is, in sum, no big fine fellow. The pattern of his body is sensitive and slight, supple and strong. The waist is small, the hips narrow, the small of the back tense and alive; only the legs are a little bowed from weeks and months on a horse. His movement when he walks is swaying like a woman's, lithe like a dancer's. His mouth is sensitive and droll; his eyes look at once mild, lazy and critical, as if they had been long used to the beauty and finish of horses and to simple physical things done perfectly.

I see the cowboy standing there before the window of Rabe's antique shop, which opens off the hotel where the good tourists go. He wears no coat, the brown flannel sleeves of his shirt show against his

darker waistcoat, which does not meet the trousers behind but leaves a fulness of the shirt puffing out. The trousers are tight in the waist, the hips, the legs. His hat is a wide Stetson; on each side of it in front the brim is twisted as if he had been constantly doffing it. Around his neck he wears no cravat, but a great handkerchief rather, red, dotted with green designs. On his feet he wears boots that are cut up high in front of the knee and lower behind. These boots are clay yellow with much red stitching across the foot, and around the top there are five-petalled roses in white and red leather stitched on. The heels of these boots are high and little, and are placed far under, directly beneath the arch of the foot; the fit of the boots is close and tight, full of the wearer's pride in his small feet; what this tradition is we know: it is Spanish, from the time of the conquistadores.

The taste behind the arrangement of the window is exotic, clever and charming; the objects are choice, but they are not for poor people. At the back stands a portrait of Louis Quinze, looking very powdered, ample and vacuous, beside curtains of wine-red velvet and a velvet table with his

crown and sceptre cushioned upon it. There is a tray of tiny Mexican figures, not so high as chessmen, in red coral and onyx; a sixteenth-century choir book whose black and red notes could be read from across the street; two chasubles in green and black, both heavy with gold, both Spanish. On the floor near the chasubles is a Chinese box in red lacquer with gilt warriors stalking over it; a cigarette case of yellow tortoise unmottled and fragile; two small altar amphoræ in silvered wood; and two spurs from Guadalupe, brass with silver flowers inlaid, the straps are carved leather; the rowels of the spurs are starwheels, whose points in a horse's flank will send him off like a rocket. There is a great Russian jewel as large as your hand, a love-knot and eagle encrusted with rose diamonds. Near the window sits a cock in white jade no higher than a swallow; and beside him, and twice his height, running along the window glass, is a line of crystal images from the late Renaissance by way of Spain and Mexico. One of the images has eyes of turquoise in a black agate head, and gracious curved hands of agate. It is full of age and excellence, each one of these images, harmonious forms flow-

ing together in a translucent whole. In a far corner is a pedestal and its Madonna of chestnut wood with blue rubbed on in bands and traces of gilding.

The cowboy stands there without hurry, rolling a cigarette and looking in at the display of objects behind the sheet of glass. He takes his time as his habit is, in those long hours on horseback, on the porch of the ranch-house in the evening, by the campfire. He is at home in silence and in himself. His nervous hands twitch the cigarette, otherwise he is still. His steady eyes rest on the crystal images, in which the light gathers, making their shapes bright and quiet like water and their perfection fresh and strange.

THEY had walked along without saying anything till they came to what was known as the pavilion, which was a sort of shed, with four cedar posts set into the hard clay ground and capped by a square flat roof. The manager of the dude ranch had built it as an objective for walks; the guests could sit down there, breathe again, survey the valley below, the mountains beyond, and talk about the view.

It was the hour before sunset, but from this place the sun was hidden by a narrow peak that rose, singly, and high above the line of mountains, off to the west. Out over the whole valley, and against the hills and ranges stretching along the south and east, the light fell, still bright and sharp. The strange, brilliant, far-off sky was without a cloud, and from its lower rim a golden color was creeping upward. In this light, which filled the air and shone from the sky and was so brightly reflected from the ground, the two figures in the pavilion were like images.

He was lounging on the rough seat, crossing his knees and lighting a cigarette. She was standing with her back to him, leaning against one of the posts and looking out before her over that clear valley. Its white ground was scattered with low bushes of mesquite, cactus, and chaparral. Part of it was already in shadow, and beyond it rose the mountains, barren and superb, blazing here and there in the sun, the rest violet and blue, with patches of faint white. In the light the mountains seemed suspended, imminent, unreal. The first of summer was coming on.

A strip of green followed the stream that came from springs up in the hills and wound along through the valley. At one place there were trees and a little hut of white-washed adobe, where the goatherds lived. The goats were spread out now, grazing, the whole slope covered with them, far down, white and curiously quiet in the late, clear air. A Mexican boy among them was blowing his pipe. It was one of those pipes that the peons make out of clay and stripe with colors; the sound of it came up from the valley, clear and solitary. Maria stood leaning against the pavilion post, listening

to the pipe; it was like the voice of that country, like the first faint star arising.

Larry Hall, without moving anything but his arm, threw the half-smoked cigarette over the ledge near him and lit another.

"The people at the hotel all think we're engaged, Marie," he said, changing her name, as he had always done, from Spanish into French. "Well, at any rate you could hardly blame them for that, could you?"

She said nothing.

"Can you?" he repeated.

"No, Larry, you can hardly blame them," she said, without turning.

He was a young man who, after his education at Groton and Harvard, had played golf in half a dozen countries. People liked him. He took his opinions from his New York clubs, but his wits were his own. He was far from being a fool, and he understood a good many things because they came through his skin. He was stale only because of his money, the way he lived and his friends, all of whom were as stale as he for the same reasons, and some staler, because they were born with less

brains. Every season they crossed on the Paris or the Ile de France, arrived in Europe, met again, and went on doing the same things together.

A year ago he had met, in the country somewhere near Paris, Maria Carillo, whose stories had lately come very much into vogue, and who was spending the summer with a group of writers, very successful in their way and quite as flat as Larry's own world. Larry had known crowds of women but never one like Maria. He changed his summer plans to fit hers; he changed his autumn sailing from the Paris to the Ile de France, to cross with her. All that winter he had taken her around New York, to great applause among his friends; and she had about agreed to marry him, when this ruction came into her head.

Suddenly Maria had professed to feel a disgust at the life she led. She spoke of a great loathing for the New York game, the world's game. For this buttered life that everybody led. She was tired of corn-fed people, her own corn-fed public. Look how people come back from Europe later every autumn, she said, and in the spring rush off earlier. Did anybody look at the moon any longer? Wasn't

everybody you knew in town as like—see Molière's Sosia—as two drops of milk?

Maria put it that way to make people laugh, and ranted and laughed herself, swearing at one party she would never go to another and saying the same thing over again at the next. But Larry had his own way of knowing, nevertheless, that life had gone flat on her. He heard no longer of any new story that was under way. He knew her well enough to know there was no telling what was going on in that bright head. The only thing he could do was to take it all as a sign of driving too hard, writing and going till she was sick of things, but he took it as real nevertheless. "I know what you mean, old chap," he said, in good faith. Then she had the notion of going to the Southwest. "Texas," she said, laughing, "we know from the movies how good it is." "But why not California?" he said. "The Carillos are Southern California." "They had to get there, don't you think?" she said. He thought, "What is it now?" but said nothing more on the subject. "Grandfather Carillo told me things," she said, but did not say what things and Larry did not ask. He knew at least that when

Maria was ten years old or so, the old man had come East from California to visit his New York son, and had talked to the little girl hours on end about her father's family. What things of her family he had told her, who knows, down there in the West! Nor how they may have stayed in her mind, been dwelt upon, turned into living stories. There were two phrases he had heard her say a number of times that must have come from these thoughts: the sun that returns to shine on life—the long line of the years——

Two months ago Larry had asked himself several times whether or not Maria would think more of him if he was not such a doormat, and then had come to Texas with her.

But they had been six weeks at the ranch, and it was high time to settle matters.

"Marie," he began now, looking up at her back, "you go on with your view, and I'll talk again on the West. This country here. It's single enough, as you say; it's barren enough, grand enough, if you like it, which I don't." She said nothing.

"The mountains in this part of the world—Corayones, Tierra Vieja, Chinati, Santiago—the

rivers around here and creeks—Rio Grande, Alamito, Torneros, Black Hills—even the names in this country take you. You associate it with your blood, I know. And so something possesses you. God knows what, but something's got you. We've had a brave taste of the West, haven't we? I have, I know, what with canned tomatoes and children yapping at the table. It's not the life that either you or I have led."

But that was not the point, it was a familiar subject but was not the point. She knew it and he did. Maria had told him about two weeks ago that she thought she might be in love with Chick Edwards.

Chick was the cowboy from the Verde ranch that came over with horses for the guests when there was a crowd. He had saved up from what he got as a cowboy, which was fifty dollars a month, till he had three thousand in the bank. With that he had bought a share in the Verde herd. It was one of the small ranches in that country, only five or six thousand acres; and the owner had sold it only as a way of securing Chick's interest and tying him to the ranch. Chick had a little house there and gave his time to the cattle business. Larry had seen

him often enough. A tall young man, twenty-six perhaps, with black hair and gray eyes, his face burnt brown and red, his teeth white. It was clear why women might like him, some women. That combination of a man's strength and a strange tenderness like a child's—that curious air of refinement—that rough, bluff business—a good deal of silence— Something also that touched the maternal and the physical.

"They want to put him to bed and then crawl in after him," Larry said, pleased with the epigram.

He had seen Chick drinking in a Mexican saloon once, the time the guests at the ranch went off on a trip to the border, and afterward galloping like mad on that lean pony of his that nobody but himself was allowed to feed and curry. Larry had seen plenty of men drinking, but seeing Chick a little drunk was different; it was like an affair in nature: the prairies, the rivers and the air seemed excessive and overcome. He thought of that occasion whenever Maria spoke of Chick, or when he saw her riding off with him.

This morning after breakfast Maria had said, "Larry, I've got to make up my mind and be done

with it. I've told Chick I'll meet him soon after seven, at the pavilion out there, and promised to tell him then."

"Tell him what?"

"What I'm going to do. If I say yes, I'll just go on with him."

He had talked for hours trying to get this business out of her head. It might be useless to talk about it now but he began again:

"Old chap, I don't want to be boring, I said everything this morning I could think of. And I don't have to tell you what I think of you. But I say one thing at least again. You've told me it's not that you've been so happy here in this country. Well, maybe the best way to say it is that it's all culminated in this effect on you, I mean in falling in love with Chick. But what I want to say's this: choose, if you like, this road to the burning sun in the west, there may be a taste for it in your complicated ego—but for God's sake use your head. What the hell will you talk about with this breath of the prairies after you marry him, and what the hell, after your life in New York, will you do in this desert, I ask you? You'll admit this is a bit differ-

ent from the life either of us has known. What the hell?"

He saw her turn that lovely face to him, smiling.

"Yes," she said, "what the hell," so that he had to smile too.

"I'll be going. It's six and after. I'll come back for you in an hour," he said.

She came toward him a step or two but said nothing.

Maria saw him go, thinking how inconsiderate she had been, not seeming to listen when he talked. She was wilful and poisonous. But he would not mind that; what he and his friends liked best about her was her difference from people; that was what spiced her up for them. That was a natural way of thinking among people who had to avoid being bored. The spice of difference, personality—was it the diversion of small, jaded living, not much more? She had been wondering lately if the important thing is not how different and individual we are, but how much we are like all life. Like other people intellectually, no; but in our impulses and the heart. We seek in another, then, our own peace, as a thing in nature seeks water in a pool.

She said to herself, standing there, as she had said already a hundred times, phrases that she had been turning over in her thoughts:

to live——

to endure our own company through years——

love——

a passionate strangeness——

a knowledge of rightness in the beloved——

a passion to be consumed, exactly as all things under the sun that follow its fire move finally toward dust——

She turned back to where she had been before, and stood looking out at the early dusk walking in the valley, and the strange quietness that filled the sky and came down over the mountains. She saw the night closing its silver eyelids, and heard the pipe still playing: she had the sense of being drawn out of her body, of time the dream, of the story written out, of no more fear forever.

Two or three miles out of Cordova, off the Valencia road, was a place known as the farm of Los Corderos, though there was in fact only a handful of land to it and a house of two rooms, white-

washed, with four white columns in front. Poles running out from the house rested on these columns, and over them spread a grape vine, from which in autumn the long purple bunches could be seen hanging down above the white-washed flag-stones of the pavement and against the walls of the house. Los Corderos belonged to Celestina Armenta, who had it from her father. She was called, La Alcachofa, the artichoke, a vegetable whose tall leaves darkened the fields around her house. When she was younger she had married a soldier but that ended when he got himself shot in a drunken brawl. They had a child, Maria Carmen. Los Corderos was known far and wide in the country around, for three reasons: old Celestina in her time had made herself a bad name with the men, that was after her soldier's death; she had a beautiful daughter, Maria Carmen, whom she had contrived to send for a year to the sisters in the Calle Amador de los Ríos, where she had learned to read; and every year Celestina gave a sort of picnic at Los Corderos, where the peasants and some of the poor people from town came with baskets, and Celestina had a booth where she sold

them brandy, sugared sweet potatoes, cut in strips, and taffy. These picnics began in the afternoon and there was dancing till long after the paper lanterns in the arbor were lighted and the musicians had drunk too much to play very well.

The year Maria Carmen was eighteen La Alcachofa arranged that the fiesta should come on her saint's day, and let the fact be known, so that there were more young people than ever. To the rear of the house was a little grove of almond trees, with an open space in the midst of it, like a tiny plaza; and here the two guitar players were stationed and the dancing went on. Sometimes many couples danced, sometimes only a girl with the castanets and her partner. The clacking of castanets, so strangely bright and resonant, followed you wherever you went. People strolled about, drank brandy from La Alcachofa's booth, sat in groups around their lunch baskets; in the arbor some men and women were singing country songs and laughing. La Alcachofa, with a sharp ear, could hear her child's laughter and pretty voice when suitor after suitor presented himself for the dancing. Everything seemed to be going well enough.

But later, when she left the booth and went out to the grove with some glasses and brandy in one of those green jars that are called *parrots* in Andalusia, she saw Maria Carmen standing apart, at the edge of the crowd, not speaking to anyone, looking at something. La Alcachofa stopped to find out what it was all about. Then at the other side of the dancing space she saw some couples waiting for the music to start, and in front of them a young man whom she recognized as Jacinto Carillo. He had been dancing with a Cordova girl called Elena, who stood now with her arm through his. But he was staring at Maria Carmen, who was standing there with her great eyes fixed on him in a fashion that made her mother want to beat her. Then he left Elena and the others and came straight across to ask Maria Carmen to dance with him. La Alcachofa saw that and felt herself so boiling with anger that for a moment she could do nothing. They had been together for half the dance before she stepped out among the dancers and snatched Maria Carmen by the sleeve.

"Here," she said, in the voice she used when drunken bullies made a row at her picnics, "you

are wanted. Take this to the party over there and then come to the house, you little fool! And quick too." Maria Carmen, not being able even to look at Jacinto after that, took the brandy and walked away. He turned on his heels without speaking to the old woman.

La Alcachofa, who knew what she knew about men and women, knew at once what had happened: these two were in love. Jacinto Carillo was one of those young men on Andalusian farms from whom the bull-fighters come. He had killed his bull at a number of fairs and country occasions and had been applauded. But people said he would never stick at it, he would never stick at anything, they said. He was a handsome fellow, with his straight nose and strong legs, La Alcachofa took that in. He was supposed to be lazy, but that, she knew, may have been only because he came from the Santa Marina district. She knew about Jacinto. But bull-fighting, drifting, handsome or lazy, none of it mattered to her; what mattered was that he interfered with her plans.

The Marqués de Valsequillo had been the Don Juan Tenorio of his generation in that province.

He lived less and less now in his palace in the Calle del Sol, where the library walls were hung with the portraits of his mistresses, which had been painted under his direction, from miniatures, portraits, and ardent descriptions, by an artist from Seville; and more and more in the huge country palace of his family at La Corra, where most of the village paid him rent. He was at fifty a broken-down rake and had decided to marry, and since he hated his family and the whole society of Cordova, to marry to please himself. He had heard of La Alcachofa's daughter, of her beauty and virtue and free temper, and the old woman in her turn, hearing of his inquiries, had contrived that the marquis should see Maria Carmen without the girl's knowing it, at mass and in the street, three times, and each time two gold pieces for the mother. She would have let him have her daughter as another of his mistresses but was not sure she could persuade Maria Carmen; and, moreover, she knew of the marquis' notion of taking a wife. For one more bait she had seen to it that he knew of her picnic that day, as a good time to get a look at her daughter and to speak with her if he chose.

Her plot had carried, for as she turned to go back to the house a woman came running to tell her that the Marqués de Valsequillo was waiting to see her. He had left his coach at the gate.

What had passed already between La Alcachofa and the marquis nobody knew, but they were not long now in coming to the point. The marquis had come, he said, because he must leave that night for La Granja, to which the king had summoned him on affairs connected with the province. He had come to speak with the Señora Armenta and with her daughter, if that was possible.

"If that is possible?" he said.

"What is there not possible, for you, Señor Marqués?"

"My compliments," said the Marqués de Valsequillo, bowing and at the same time presenting a box covered in red silk.

The shrewd old woman, though she knew she had a fine present, did not open the box for a moment, but said to him,

"And what do you wish of my daughter, Señor Marqués?"

"Tell me what's in your mind," he said.

"She's a mind of her own."

La Alcachofa had by now opened the box and taken out a long gold chain. She put it around her neck with a deep bow and raised eyebrows.

The marquis through the window could see Maria Carmen on her way to the house. The shining twilight enveloped her. Seeing her thus, he understood what the woman meant by her question.

"I wish to marry her," he said.

La Alcachofa forgot herself as she clutched his arm.

"Then you must take her off very soon, Señor Marqués. She's coming now. I saw her dancing with a certain young man. You'll see what happens now, after the pair of them meets."

When Maria Carmen came in, they shut the door and bolted it, so that none of the guests could enter, and there was a long scene, with the girl frightened and surprised—her mother had been shrewd enough to keep it all a secret from her—and flattered, and the old woman cursing and crying by turns, going down on her knees, or putting her arms around Maria Carmen as if she were

still a child. Why had she worked her fingers to the bone, she said, so that her daughter might be educated and become a lady, if Maria Carmen was not to marry a rich lord? Who else was there? A lot of farm boys and bull-ring trash. Had nobody any duty to her mother any more?

The marquis took a velvet box out of his pocket and drew from it a wreath of diamonds made into a brooch, which he presented to his betrothed. She could go in his coach with him to Cordova where his cousin, the Señorita Rafaela Montedor, would take her in charge and accompany her to La Corra. They would live in the palace there until his return from Court, which should be as quickly as the king permitted, a fortnight at the most. Then would come the wedding. She would be the Marquesa de Valsequillo. He would send her dresses from Madrid. His cousin would order garments from Seville. In the end Maria Carmen was hustled out in tears and confusion, to the coach, the marquis at her side, and driven away.

La Alcachofa, when the door had banged and the coach driven off, took the chain from around her neck and dropped it in her bosom.

Dusk came on and the lanterns were lighted in the arbor. The musicians brought their stools and sat down on the white flagstones, leaning their backs against the wall. A third musician had joined the two first, and now above the guitars rose the accordion, with its reedy voice. People came to stand at the columns and listen under the glare of the lanterns. La Alcachofa lit the lantern that hung on her booth and went and stood beside it.

Presently a rout of dancers followed the music and the crowd. She watched them, looking for Jacinto. He was not there. Some couples she had not seen before began to dance on the hard ground by the arbor. Then she saw a commotion among the dancers and Jacinto pushing his way through them.

"Where is Maria Carmen?" he said, coming up to the booth.

La Alcachofa gave her laugh. She saw that he was one of those young men who have the power to go white and red with their passions. She stopped the laughing and thought of her youth.

"Where is she?" Jacinto said again.

"Maria Carmen, Señorito, is gone in his coach to marry the Marqués de Valsequillo."

Jacinto stepped back and stood looking dumbly around him, from person to person. The musicians stopped to hear what it was that was happening. Suddenly he turned and called out, "Elena!" and catching her out of the crowd by the hands, he whirled her into a dance, as the musicians struck up again.

The Marqués de Valsequillo did not return within the fortnight as he had expected. It was some council that the king had called, a dozen of the richest landowners in the southern provinces, in the matter of taxes; at least that was so at first, until the famous Tax of 1741, as it was called, had been signed. Later, it was said, his majesty, hearing of the beauty waiting at La Corra, chose to pay off certain old scores about a lady whose affections the marquis had carried off, many years before. The marquis was detained at Court until almost Christmas.

He was expected to arrive in the afternoon at La Corra, but it was evening before he came. The old butler had let down the huge chandelier in the salon, and lighted all the candles before he drew it up again. Vases of flowers stood wherever there was a place for them; the marquis had other tastes

besides that for women. The sweet odors of the flowers spread everywhere, the light of the candles revealed the magnificent old room, and fell on the painted ceiling, the stone panels of the wall, the long stair leading up to the gallery and chambers above, and on the great window at the foot of the stair. But when he entered he seemed indifferent to this air of a celebration in his honor; he was annoyed because he had found himself arriving on the feast day Saint Demetrius, La Corra's patron. In the afternoon there had been a bullfight, and the streets that night would be full of music, crowds, and noise.

He ordered the servants about and sent for the dueña, his cousin, the Señorita Rafaela Montedor, who came at once. He bowed over the thin white hand, which he kissed, and presented her with the bracelet of black onyx striped in gold, for the marquis liked making handsome gifts. Then he began to ask abruptly after Maria Carmen and cursed the fiesta in the town. Had Maria Carmen gone on with her studies? Were the arrangements for the wedding complete? What did she think of him?

Rafaela replied, with a concentrated dignity that

exasperated him, that the girl had made some progress with her singing, but had shown more taste for reading: they had read many pages of poetry together, the Señorita sometimes explaining the meaning. As to what Maria Carmen thought of the marquis how could one say, she had seen him but once?

When the marquis had put the case with its emerald necklace that he had brought for Maria Carmen, and two or three smaller boxes with rings, on the table, and gone to make his toilet after the dust of the journey, the dueña sent for Maria Carmen.

Rafaela stood by the table and watched the girl descending the long stair, the candle-light falling on her dark hair, and on her face and her bosom, pale like ivory, and the dress of rose-colored satin, whose skirt trailed after her on the stair. She did not know what it was she saw about this girl as she stood watching her coming down the stair, but she could feel her hands trembling. She said nothing but could only point to the jewels lying on the table and move to one side. She saw Maria Carmen go to the table, open the boxes and look at the

jewels in silence, for a long time. Then the dark eyes looked up into the dueña's.

Rafaela did not know what she might have done then, but she was saved from that decision by Maria Carmen's turning to speak to the servant who stood in the door, asking if they should serve the marquis' supper at nine. She heard the girl saying to the servant that he should carry her regrets to the marquis, she could not come to supper that night.

The dueña brought herself up quickly and said, with great formality:

"Alfredo, say to the marquis that the Señorita is indisposed, she begs to be excused to-night. She sends her compliments to the marquis and a thousand regrets. To-morrow she hopes to be recovered and to have the honor of his company."

"Yes, Señorita."

She shut her eyes for a moment and put up her hand to her throat. Then she called after the servant:

"Alfredo."

"Señorita?"

"When you return to the kitchen tell the man

who is waiting there with the letter he has brought from Doña Maria Carmen's mother, to come at once."

"Yes, Señorita."

Maria Carmen looked at her in consternation. The dueña began speaking quickly in a low tone:

"Listen, child, my cousin will be coming in a moment. This man has been here for two hours. They brought him to me, but he says he has a gift your mother sent when she heard he was coming to La Corra for the fiesta. I know nothing but I don't believe that is why he came, Maria Carmen."

"Señorita Rafaela——"

"Let me speak. I have watched you. I can see what you think of my cousin. You have to choose. Choose, because life goes by us like a stream, as the river goes by Cordova. I looked at this young man, he is very strong, he has honest eyes, but there's something reckless, some wild thing about him. You must choose between him and us. You may lose everything, you may find everything. Look at me. What I am."

Maria Carmen caught the old white hand to her lips.

"Come here: say what you have to say at once," Rafaela said to Jacinto at the door. He carried the bundle under his arm and walked the length of the room as if he were not afraid of the devil.

She had withdrawn to the window at the foot of the stair. Jacinto was speaking to Maria Carmen. They had met, he said, only that once, but he had never been able to believe she didn't remember it as he did. He could think of no woman but her. He had sold his share of the farm. Everybody in Cordova knew when the Marqués de Valsequillo was coming home to Andalusia.

Maria Carmen was saying only his name:

"Jacinto!"

They had not touched each other.

"The fiesta's a piece of luck," he said, "will you come with me to-night?"

Maria Carmen had turned very pale.

"Don't ask me. Don't ask me that, Jacinto," she said, in a voice so high that the dueña motioned them to be quiet.

Would she come with him? He would wait in the trees across the road outside till morning. The fiesta would pass by, there was a crowd, and after

they were gone she would hear his guitar. Don't tremble like that. To-morrow night he would be in Valencia, next day the boat sailed for Vera Cruz. They would be in a new country, what new things God alone knew. He would be waiting. This was the last time.

"The marquis is coming," Rafaela said, sharply, and Jacinto, turning as if to see after the bundle on the floor beside the table, left the room by the servants' door.

The dueña explained to her cousin that Maria Carmen's mother had sent a wedding gift by some farmhand.

The Marqués de Valsequillo was looking at the girl in the rose-colored dress with the rows of pearls around her throat and the pearls on her arm. Of all the women on his walls in the Cordova palace there was none like this one. She was more beautiful than ever, the jewels and the fine clothes only set off her beauty the more. She was intelligent too, you could see that. After a year or so—no harm in one's wife's not being a fool.

He bowed very low and kissed her hand.

Then he remembered her excuses.

"Is this the lady who is so ill, may I inquire?" he said, icily.

Rafaela said:

"You can see, cousin, that Doña Maria Carmen made the effort to accompany us."

"Doña Maria Carmen—" the title of respect pleased him, it gave him new ideas—she was soon to belong to him.

"But nobody would be so blind as not to see how white she is," Rafaela said.

"Doña," he repeated, and caught Maria Carmen in his arms, and began whispering in her ear. In the midst of it she suddenly pushed him from her so hard that he caught himself against the table.

He stood a moment looking at her, then he smiled.

"Very well," he said. "Until to-morrow." He made a profound bow and went over to the bell.

"Alfredo," he said, on his way out, "have some of the Sanchez Malaga sent to my dressing-room. And put out the lights here."

"Come, we had better go," the dueña said to Maria Carmen, and the two went slowly up the stair together.

After a while you could hear the fiesta crowd far off down the road. There were horns playing, pipes, and the tapping of a drum. The revellers were louder now, after the wine all day, but the singing in the distance, coming like that, went with the moonlight on the white roads and with the spring wind in the trees. Then one of the doors above opened and Maria Carmen stepped out, listened, and then went softly along the gallery and down the stair. She was still in her satin dress and still wore the pearls. She came down the stair, guiding herself with her open hand along the wall to make no noise. The room save for the streak of light from her door was dark.

She stood for a moment with her ear to the heavy damask curtains of the window, listening, and wondering to herself what she would do if the guitar should begin. Then she drew one of the curtains a little aside and looked out. People were passing in a scattered procession, some with lanterns they had made of colored paper, some singing or laughing—it was the last of the fiesta for that year. She put her hand up over her mouth, as if the noise were hers, then she waited for them to go by. When some of them had passed there

was a blank, the white road was clear. She waited for the guitar to begin, but there was not a sound. Then more of the crowd came by, almost as many as at first. At last they were gone, she could hear them growing fainter against the gay, fading sound of the music in that first band, now a long way off. She saw how the moon shone over the world, how black the trees across the road stood, only the first of them caught the light. She drew back the curtains entirely and pressed her face against the glass of the window. Her heart was choking her. And then all of a sudden she heard the guitar, that strumming, the sweet notes—she took off the pearls and threw them on the table where the marquis' gifts were lying, then she went quickly out.

Through the high window, where she had left the curtains drawn, the moonlight streamed into the room, with its enormous shadows and its faint echo of the fiesta.

A year and a half had passed since that night in La Corra when Maria Carmen had gone away with Jacinto from the marquis' palace. They had been in the Mexican cities and towns, in Cuernavaca,

Puebla, Saltillo, and now and again on farms. There was plenty of work; Jacinto could have had a good enough living if he had chosen to stay on in any place. Sometimes there was very little to eat, and they slept in the fields; two or three times Jacinto drank too much tavern brandy and gambled away all he had. Now and then they had dazzling sums to spend.

But even with that, it was all too much the same, perhaps, too much like Spain, or too settled, or something like it; whatever it was, he was always restless to go on. To the north of Saltillo and Guadalupe, a long way off by the Camino Real, was the province of California. He had decided to go there and make a home. Up to now the money that he had earned had been lightly spent, but from the day the idea came into his head, he had saved. He had put by enough at last to buy two mules and a wagon for Maria Carmen and himself. They had come north with a great pack train as far as San Juan Bautista, when Maria Carmen fell sick and they had to leave the company and lodge in the town till she was better. After a while she said she was well enough to travel.

They started northward again along the great highway, with Maria Carmen sitting beside Jacinto on the driver's seat in the cooler hours, but most of the time lying on the mattress under the wagon cover. The first of summer was coming on. In a little more than a month she expected a child, and they meant to reach some of the western settlements by then, where they could stay on for a while if they chose. They were both happy about the child and used to talk of what the three of them would do when their house was built and the new land broken and planted. At the end of two weeks, one day when they had stopped at the hut of some peon who lived off in that desert country with an Indian woman, Maria Carmen felt the birth pangs come on her. The Indian woman did what she could to help, but there was nothing to lie on, only the straw mat spread over the mud floor in the corner; and so, as soon as it could be done, they lifted Maria Carmen, scarcely alive, into the wagon again and put the baby at her side. There was a town, the peon said, which they could reach by the next night. But the road they had to follow now to reach the town grew rougher as they

went, and the jolting of the wagon was too much for the dying woman; late that day she begged Jacinto to stop. He drove for better safety off the road a little and around a ledge of rock. Then he carried her in his arms to the place she pointed out, laid her on the ground and brought the covers for her. Where Maria Carmen lay she could see down over the valley; there was a strip of green, far down, and a hut like the peon's that they had left. There were goats herded over a slope, and somewhere in their midst the herdsman was blowing his pipe.

Maria Carmen lay wrapped in a brown Indian blanket, with another blanket rolled up under her head for a pillow. Jacinto, as peasants do in Spain when any one is dying, sat some little distance away, not coming near Maria Carmen, not touching her, but watching her like an animal, quiet, motionless. In his arms he held his son, about whose tiny dress he had wrapped a torn coat of his. He had started a prayer but could not go on. Maria Carmen lay now with her eyes closed; the bright light that filled the sky after the sun had set shone down on her face, which was white like wax.

After a while she opened her eyes.

"Come here, Jacinto, I want to tell you something."

He went over and laid the baby beside her and knelt down.

"Jacinto, I want to tell you that I've been happy. It's been hard for us both——"

"Yes," he said, in a low voice, "no use denying that."

"But I wanted to tell you I'm not sorry. I don't feel any regrets, Jacinto. And now I've lost even the chance to be with you."

"No, Maria——"

"Yes. But I'd do it all over again. I'd do it again. I wanted you to know that."

Jacinto put his head down on the ground and burst out crying.

Some time after, he took the child away and drew the blanket up over Maria Carmen's face, and then went to sit down on the rock again, holding the child in his arms, and watching the blue come down over the mountains, the dusk in the valley below, where the pipe was playing.

From a good way off Larry Hall, as he was

returning to the pavilion, a little earlier than he had said, caught sight of Chick coming along the trail that followed the side of the hill. He was leading two horses by the bridle, one of them his gray pony, the other a sorrel. As Larry came nearer he could see the mark branded on the gray's shoulder. He stopped to see what would happen. Chick was standing by Maria, who was looking up at him quietly and not smiling. Chick was talking, and presently he turned to the horses and began telling her about one of them, pointing to his feet, and the sorrel put out a nose to be patted. At this Maria broke into a laugh and turned to Chick. Larry heard her laugh and thought it happy like a child's; and yet it seemed to him sad; no, not sad, he was absurd to think so. He could not see her face again. And a moment later they turned and went away together down the trail.

Nevertheless he went on to the pavilion and stood there looking about him.

"Well, I'm damned!" he said aloud, shrugging his shoulders.

Then he stood listening to the silence around

him, saw the vast sky, the violent shadows, the gleaming earth far and wide in the dusk; and suddenly gave a little shiver, as he turned to go back.

FELIPE

FELIPE

Out in the horse-lot and the cowboys' bunk-house that lie in front of the place where we lodge, there is a clatter of laughter and cries; Ray, the foreman, is riding about showing some of his sorrel's tricks, and Pete, the manager of the dude ranch, is on all fours with a saddle on his back, bucking and plunging about as he tries to throw his rider, who is the thirteen-year-old daughter of a ranchman guest. Presently Vicente will have all the horses saddled, thirty of them, and every one who wishes will ride away for the rest of the morning, galloping out over the cattle trails and down the hills, looking up stray horses and calves, riding two hours and coming back to eat a monstrous lunch. It is ten o'clock now and the shadows are shortening under the willow trees. Presently their shadows will be smaller yet, and, in the midst of that full wide glare of the sun, the shade in the porches will darken and will retreat into thin coolness.

The ranch-house proper is three hundred feet away, hidden in trees. It is the second owner now who lives there. The first came forty years ago, found the many springs among these hills, planted live-oaks, willows and locusts, built the corrals, with their heavy twisted cedar posts that run like entrance courts, one leading into another, and died at last not far from eighty and was buried on a hill overlooking his estate. A great slab of granite marks his grave, with a shaft at the head that you can see for miles as you ride across this country where he lived so long. On the headstone are three reliefs in circles, a horse, a sheep, a cow, all the same size, and the name and two dates, 1839–1917. On the great slab at the foot, in outline only, not in solid relief, and by way of Christian concession perhaps, there is, instead of any animals, a cross.

This first owner, whose tomb is set thus in the bright light, was a bachelor, and when he died he left the ranch to his foreman. The night of his death, late in the night, Pete tells me, he was alone with this friend, and, at the very last, he was troubled with regrets at having left some other

friend nothing more than ten thousand dollars. The foreman asked what he wanted to do, and the old man said he would like to give the other friend half the cattle. He was not to trouble over that, the foreman said, what he wished should be done; and so the old man died. And the next day the foreman sent word to the other man that two hundred thousand dollars' worth of cattle belonged to him. Pete has told me this quite simply, and told me also how last spring this man, out of friendship for him, lent him the old woolhouse and money to convert it into guest quarters for the dude ranch that Pete had dreams of. The dude ranch consists of this woolhouse, sixty feet long, and like a great hall with a huge chimney-piece and hearth of green stone at the end, a dining-room, open on three sides, with a fireplace in the fourth wall, a patio, around which the low adobe rooms go, like a hacienda, and a wing of shower baths plentifully fed from those blessed springs in the slopes above. And all this, the lines of these diverse roofs, the trees, the chimneys, everything, is lifted more than five thousand feet into the dome of this perfect, intense sky, against

which on every side the land rises into peaks and ridges.

So that now, in summer, Pete can use his horses here, and will not lose, as he has always done, these four months out of the year when there is no hunting. At other times he has four hunting parties, each of which takes four guests out, with horses, guide, cook, chuck wagon and supplies. Pete in his time has been a cowboy, has gone with General Pershing into Mexico on some mission about which he is darkly secret, and has served in France and distinguished himself there—after, that is, they left off telling him that government stuff of theirs about how to act with a horse. At the beginning he had run off four days to get away from the sound of them. They thought he had deserted and gone home.

In the afternoon, between dinner and dusk, nobody knows what you do do. You take your siesta, you play bridge, you sit talking in groups here and there. Great yarns are spun about life in the West as it used to be. Some listen like children; those born to be bored are bored and wish something would happen.

After supper every one goes off for another gallop, three-quarters of an hour, maybe; and I, who have been riding alone most of the afternoon, sit in the patio with my old aunt. She is Southern Old-Style, and, from that angle, does not find the ranch so perfect as I do. The breeches on so many of the young ladies may be overlooked, they make riding safer; but the general air of our life strikes her as casual. She dresses every evening as if she were visiting, and does not permit herself to lounge about, not to say put her feet up everywhere.

Before supper, she says, that Mr. Peter of mine was playing an odd sport for a grown-up man. People were on the porch of the house where the cowboys live, and were laughing as they watched him in the lot there lassoing a gray hen. The hen ran about clucking and squawking and he would throw the rope and bring her down. The young lady who is always completing her toilet in company, from her vanity box, my aunt says, was excited indeed and kept bouncing out of her chair and offering to wager you in favor of the hen.

At nine o'clock Felipe comes in to play. He is

a little Mexican boy, eleven years old, that Pete found out in the hills. His face is old for his years, thin like one of the young saints in a Mexican chapel, with great eager eyes. Some one once gave him an old violin, and he made himself a bow for it out of a willow stick and hair from a horse's tail. He plays *La Golondrina* for us, and two songs he has heard, and then he plays a composition of his own. It is called *Vamos por la cine*—Let's Go to the Movies—and into it, as he plays, he puts all his soul. He has never been to the movies and thinks it must be the most beautiful thing in the world.

BEATUS REX

When we left Assisi we had no idea of seeing Florence. Miss Hutchinson and I had met at the hotel in Assisi, and she had told me of a commission of hers to do an article on Pisa, which she had not yet seen and thought was hardly in her line. Would I come along and do some illustrations? I said I would. I was to make the drawings, she to write what she called in her journalese the story. Pisa, she said, was at least better than Florence, which, according to her, had been sketched, painted, described, and recounted till it was black in the face; it was exactly the sort of subject she meant to avoid. There were plenty of other towns in Italy.

But it turned out after all that our best train north would go by Florence. I begged my companion to let us stop off one day at least; there were reasons that made me want to revisit the convent at Fiesole once more before I died, if only for an afternoon. Well, she said, very well; I

could have Florence this time, provided—did I remember the doctor in Molière who said if the other doctor would only agree to an emetic for this patient, he could give anything he liked to the next?—provided she was at liberty to stop wherever she chose, the rest of the way. We were in Florence soon after noon, and later we took the tram that left the Duomo at four o'clock for Fiesole.

The little sister who met us at the door and was to be our guide through the convent had never seen me before, and I was glad of that. I was hoping not to see the mother superior again, but to make this visit like a stranger to the place. We saw first the chapel and then the fresco of Saint Jerome and his lion outside in the portico, where Cosimo di Medici's stair ascended from the road below. It was a stair with a high wall on one side; on the other a solid balustrade from which you looked down upon the valley where Florence lay and, beyond that, Samminiato and the line of hills. Up the stair, as it mounted, there were cypresses; there were two rows of them—on each step in the middle a cypress stood and one at the end near

the balustrade; their shadows fell on the flagstones of the steps and on the wall, and the light under them was soft and quiet. Afterward we saw the cloister with the pots of coleus crowded on the low wall between the columns, and the arms of the Medici on the well-head, and after the cloister the court with the date-palms, the balcony where the nuns gather for recreation in the evening after dinner, and the long wall covered with yellow roses. Then we came to the garden, the geranium terrace, the cypress avenue below, the rondel with bay-trees and oleanders. The oleanders were in blossom and the whole place was sweet.

We came along the path to the olive-orchard, where a gate is and the statue of Saint Joseph. Under an olive-tree seats were arranged, where you could rest—two iron benches and some wicker chairs; and there the sister left us. It was time for benediction, she said, and we must excuse her. If we wished to come to benediction—or after benediction, we could go out by the stair; or, if we liked, there was the rose walk, half-way up the hill, to the gate on to the piazza; Cherubina would let us out.

We sat down and Miss Hutchinson lit a cigarette.

"Now tell me about your cousin," she said. "You promised you would, if we came here, though I generally hate stories about people's cousins; it tangles things up."

I said: "About Rex?"

"Yes, who was here. That's the point, isn't it —he was here?"

"Yes, that's the point."

"But, see here, why's our Saint Joseph got a Phrygian cap? I just noticed it." She burst out laughing, and pointed gaily to the saint on his high pedestal. "Considering the Phrygian significance."

"It's Phrygian all right," I said, "but nobody'd know why. Look how quiet the statue looks in the shadow. It's in a poem Rex wrote: 'Thou art as alabaster filled with wine'——"

"To Saint Joseph, is that?" She was still gay over the Phrygian business; it involved her precious Freud.

"No," I said, "it's not Joseph; it's a love-poem."

"Then go on, *caro mio,* tell me about Rex." She settled her quick little body, like a lean bird, in her chair.

It was not so easy to do, I said, making Rex intelligible, but I would try.

The first time I saw this cousin was in the spring, in Texas, two years before the war broke out. I had been in New York all winter painting. They were baroque murals that I was doing, in the grand style, all the sumptuous curves, the rich variants on the circle, the magnificence of the baroque tradition in anatomy and architecture, fruits and flowers. I finished my commission in April, and all of a sudden, one day soon after, I knew that I wanted to be in another country. New York was all very well, but I wanted to see the light flooding down from a far, bright sky, to see white roads going off over the hills, stretches of white rocks and sharp, black greens, to see the morning in that world, the full, white noon, and then the breathless spring nights, with the starry mists and the tiers of bright, innumerable stars above that sad, sweet land.

I would go to Austin, already familiar to me,

and walk about the country and paint. Miles of purple winecups and wild verbenas, the color of lilacs, would be in blossom; and the blue lupines would spread so thick in places that travellers on the train would ask if there were lakes.

"But if you are in Austin, you must meet your cousin Rex Drouillard," my aunt, who takes the family very seriously, wrote me from New Orleans. "His mother is here now for the winter with her brother, your cousin the doctor. Cousin Emma is the same as ever, still waltzing all night if she gets a chance." My aunt told me things I had heard all my life but might have forgotten about his mother and about Rex. And after all, too, she reminded me, his great-grandfather, Uncle Charles McGehee, was my great-grandfather's brother, which makes him kin. My cousin Emma McGehee had married Henry Drouillard, a gentleman much older than herself, and the head of a great Creole family in Louisiana. Till his death she was a leader in New Orleans society. But after he died the house was sold, for they had spent most of his money. Cousin Emma took Rex, who was about fifteen at the time, to Paris with her and spent whatever was left.

Mother and son were in Paris five years, which made Rex twenty when they came back to live with his uncle. For a while he tried tutoring in French, since he was by now more French than American, and spoke French better than he spoke English; but his manner toward the young ladies was such that fathers put an end to the lessons, and the tutoring was soon all over. And yet, my aunt observed, doubtless quite shrewdly, this would shortly have taken care of itself, if people could only have a little sense. Rex had not seemed so fiery to her, not as all that; she took his behavior to be really only a French notion he had, by which you consider it the manly thing to do, when you are left alone with a woman, to make love to her. However that might be, Rex had come to the university at Austin—the French professor there had been a friend of the family—and had burrowed his way into the classes, or had it burrowed for him by this family friend, and in two years had got himself graduated, just how God alone knew. He had supported himself by a little translating for the university library and by a monthly comic paper that he had established and that had not only paid expenses but made a

profit; it had even begun to pay for contributions —people would have gladly donated their writings for the sheer pleasure of seeing themselves in print, but Rex as editor had a taste for doing things up in professional style—when the dean of the college heard too much of its Parisian note and closed it down.

The second year Rex had an assistantship not in French but, of all things, in political economy, which he won not so much through his study of the subject as of the professor, who was all temperament. Rex had written his mother an amusing letter about him, and how, from the time he heard him burst out at Christmas dinner on the love life of North American lizards, he knew he should get on with the economist; Cousin Emma had read the letter aloud one afternoon at a card-table, and all the family had given their opinion on the subject of its propriety. His mother tells me also, my aunt wrote, that there are several young ladies who are not perhaps in love with Rex but who seem to make him silk shirts and have him to suppers.

The first time I saw Rex he was sitting at

his table naked, with a gilt-brown crown on his head. He sat at the table writing, with the crown on his head and a towel round his loins. His room was in a sort of outhouse in a back corner of his landlady's yard. It was a two-room place with a porch running along in front, and had doubtless once been meant for the servants' quarters. By the porch there was a locust-tree in flower; the white blossoms were scattered on the floor of the porch and on the steps. It was early in the afternoon and the sun was blinding. The shade of the porch and the shade in the room were very distinct. The air was full of the drowsy sweet of the locusts.

We shook hands, and Rex, before he sat down again at his table, reached for some white cotton trousers and put them on. He had taken off the crown.

"I don't suppose you mind," he said, "but I'd better put some clothes on. I like to wear the crown sometimes, got it at a *bal poudré*." The simple explanation seemed to serve our purposes.

I took the only other chair to be seen. There was nothing else around but the white iron bed

and the table; the room was bare as only a room in Texas can be. He was tall and blond, and spoke English rather precisely, like a foreigner, but had so much of a sort of half-laugh when he talked that he sounded careless or loose. You might set this little laugh of Rex's down as shy, or nervous, or silly, or as ironical, or as defensive. Whatever it was, it did not improve the impression he gave people.

"My mother writes to me about three times a year," he said, "and I write to her about three times. But she's broken the rule to tell me you were coming. She says you're a fine painter. She adores painting. Everybody in Paris painted her, you know. Immortal Helen and all that."

I said: "We'll pray at least that I'll be fine some day."

"You see while she is the painted swan I'm only a good man Friday to a college professor. These are his quizzes I'm reading. It's all rot, and I wouldn't do them if the course were mine. But he believes in it, so I'm doing it."

"Well, now that, I should say," Miss Hutchinson grumbled, interrupting me for the first time

and beginning to turn the emerald round and round on her finger, as she did when about to be dubious, "sounds a little dutiful and tiresome."

"Not at all," I said, "it's only using his imagination about the other man."

"My mistake. What did he say?"

"He said: 'But it gets me my six hundred bucks and I can live on that, the college year. Especially since, being a professorito now, I'm invited to all the dances instead of having to chip in. And I've gotten even with this life a little by wearing my crown and getting the air on my skin. And gotten even a little with this—' He reached over for a sheet of paper; it was a poem."

Miss Hutchinson crossed her legs.

"That's better," she said; "that's better. Did you see it?"

" 'I'll give it to you,' Rex said; 'I've a carbon. I'm that efficient.' For that matter you could see by his eyes and hands that he could show efficiency enough in case he cared to bother. In his own affairs there were spurts of it when it seemed worth while."

Miss Hutchinson turned and looked me in the eye.

"And tell me—was the poem good? How was it?"

"At least I know it by heart," I said.

"Well, then, say it for me."

I repeated the poem to her:

Across the marble ledges of the dawn,
Rose-tinct and gold, like a Venetian's hair,
Day cometh now, and from the argent lawn
Of Paradise leans down upon the air.

And the white Artemis grows pale and fades,
She who with splendor drowns the unbosomed night,
Her twinkling flock asleep, folded in shades;
The larks are singing on the hills of light.

Waken, O lovely eyelids, waken slowly,
The dew on these green slopes trembles for thee;
This morn is one, but thou art all, and holy,
And holier with the dawns that are to be.

My companion heard the poem to the end without moving.

"But look, *caro mio*, poetry's the only thing I can stand rich. That's rich."

She could be very nice sometimes.

When the light had faded and I was through

with my painting, I used to drop in for Rex and take him somewhere for supper—he had no regular place, which in a town like Austin is a wild way of living indeed. Afterward we walked in the country. People along the road to Mount Bonnell used to see from their porches and little front yards two young men walking past, talking busily, one of them laughing a great deal, not very loud. Rex was not as strong as a horse, but he could walk forever, as long a time as he could talk; he had the kind of endurance that women sometimes display; a mysterious vitality fed his slight body with some sort of deathless elixir.

One night, walking, we met some acquaintance of Rex's, who joined us and began to talk about his troubles. He was a solemn-looking young man, almost at the end of his college course, and he told us that he was trying to decide what he ought to do. He had seen a student cheating on examinations, looking at notes that he had hidden in his coat-pocket. Here we were with the honor system, he said, and under the honor system you were pledged not only to be straight yourself but to see that other men were straight. And yet he hated

to report the chap, and get him expelled and all. What ought he do?

"Do you remember Jeanie Deans?" Rex said. The senior shook his head. "Well, anyhow she's a Scott heroine, and she wouldn't tell a lie even to save her sister from hanging. No, right was right, and Jeanie preferred an easy conscience for herself."

The student was silent, in consternation, I suppose, and walked along with his hand up before his mouth. I said: "Yes, but doesn't there come a point sometimes in your living, a point on whose rightness your whole existence afterward will depend?"

"My God, you're elaborate, darling!" Miss Hutchinson said, when I came to this point.

"Well, how else can you say it? I mean a point where your decision goes down to your very elements."

"I get you, sweet. They're what people used to call crucial moments morally, the sweet old things! What did Rex say?"

"He said: 'If your precious existence hangs on that moment, well, let it hang.' 'Like Jeanie's sister,' I said."

At that Miss Hutchinson chuckled a little.

That was about all the religion Rex had. From his careless prattling you gathered at length perhaps that he saw life as a flux. Something on the whole pathetic, something set in darkness. Filled with little bodies of men who were confused, warm-hearted, transitory, and touching. You can give others whatever good or daring or brief audacity you have in you to give; for yourself, meantime, you can admit life's beauty and fatalism. He was a sort of voluptuous mystic.

"And the soul?" my companion asked.

"I fancy he never thought he had one."

"Whew! I'm damned devout myself. I wouldn't risk it," she said.

I said: "I don't suppose the notion of a risk of any kind was very clear to Rex."

"Well, what I'd like to know is where he thought he was headed."

"There, I suppose, he did variations on Einstein."

"Space all bent up?"

"Yes, and thought that the shortest distance between two points was in himself."

"That's a whang of a thought. But I don't skip around about my little soul."

"Perhaps Rex had his mother's feet in his brain."

She made no answer to that, thinking perhaps of her soul, which she must have risked plenty of times; and I said nothing more. We sat following our own private thoughts.

"Obviously there's one other department," my friend observed presently.

"You mean love? He was shy about it. He spoke of it once. Not anybody there in Austin, not the loyal shirt-makers he lounged around with. I met one of them; she overdid the comrade note so that I wondered. But I never wondered about Rex. He was in love with a girl he had met in New York the year before. Sometimes he wrote to her and she to him, but not regularly. They were both in love with one another. I don't know any more."

She complained of the poor data I offered her, and I continued:

"After all," I said, "I was in Texas for only a fortnight or three weeks at the most. Then that

next autumn the War broke out and in a month Rex had left Texas and was on his way to enlist for France. I did not see him, but I had a letter from the boat, mailed at Cherbourg. He was on his way to Paris, he said, and was sorry not to have seen me; but a week in New York was so short. The rest was about seeing the girl again during that week before he sailed. I could see he had to talk of what he felt. All of it was about love. But the way he said it was satirical. All of it satirical, which was like him.

"I heard nothing else from Rex, either at that time or later, when I was in camp, and then five years afterward he wrote me from Fiesole here. The letter was not very long. He had been gassed in the Argonne and his lungs were not so good. He was here at the convent rather indefinitely. The sisters nursed him; they were like mothers and saints. He had never seen goodness like that. He enclosed a poem he had written. I might like it. That was about all."

My companion threw away a cigarette that had gone out.

"And what about the woman?" she asked—"that he loved."

"Nothing."

"Not a word?"

"No, I don't even know her name."

She thought a while. Then she shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, after all, he was your friend, not mine."

I had answered the letter in good time, and then, after two months, my letter had been returned to me with a note from the mother superior informing me that Rex was dead. He had died the 24th of April.

That summer, when I was in Italy, I went to Fiesole to the convent to ask about Rex and to thank the nuns for their kindness. They were nearly all English and Irish sisters, and had made their convent into a sort of home for convalescents.

Mother Theresa seemed glad to see me; we sat down in her little drawing-room and she told me about Rex. She was a lady, and not simple and warm as so many of the nuns were apt to be, but proud, witty and intelligent, her goodness deep down in character and reserve, her piety secret and private like her prayers. My cousin was a good

young man, a kind heart; always in her prayers she had said: 'God bless him and keep him what he is.' He was considerate of the sisters' feelings, but he was not religious. He used to say that the sisters were holiest when they knelt in benediction, because then their veils hung in the best lines, and they were most human when they gathered on their balcony for their recreation, the half-hour allowed them after dinner, laughing and chattering and noisy like birds. He used to pit the saints in the garden against one another. He would come in and say that Saint Joseph was furious because the Madonna got all the flowers. He would say: 'Saint Anthony is pouting this morning; he thinks Saint Joseph has had too much attention.' That made the sisters laugh heartily and shake their fingers at him for his wickedness, but he only laughed the way he always did—that sort of little half-laugh.

Mother Theresa herself was grieved that he was not religious, but especially so since he was not going to live; the doctor said he would not last much longer; it was his lungs, from that dreadful war. Where could the poor young man's

mother have been, leaving him over here alone like that? "His mother," thought I, "was dancing in Louisiana"; but I said only: "She doubtless had no idea he was sick; he hadn't told her." I did not say, as I wanted to do, that Rex's mother, once having given birth to him, had with him about the relation of your post-box to a letter you receive. Nor did I try to speak of what that may have done to his life.

The sisters made prayers for him, the reverend mother went on, but of course they said nothing of that to him, not liking to intrude. Then, when you could see he was not going to live much longer, Mother Theresa thought she herself must speak to him a little. "Has the doctor been telling you how you are, dear?" she asked then; that was what she said. And Mr. Drouillard said: "You mean, has he told me I'm going to die?" "Yes," she said, trying to hide from him the tears she could not keep back, "God help us." "And so, mother, you think I'll be damned?" he said. And she said: "Only God can know what is in our hearts. You must pray." "No," he said, "you make the sisters pray for me—Sister Margaret, Sister Veronica,

Sister Rosa, Sister Anastasia; tell them, if they'll pray for me, I'll bring them some Turkish paste, when I'm well again, from Gilli's, to eat at recreation—that's an idea. Turkish paste for nuns!" He was smiling, but had not taken his eyes off Mother Theresa's face. No one would forget his eyes.

The next evening, after benediction, when the convent guests were at dinner and Sister Rosa came to rub his arms for the neuritis, he sent her for Mother Theresa, and when they came in he called them to the bed and told them that he had been thinking of religion and that he believed at last. How their hearts leaped for joy! Mother Theresa hurried the sister off to catch the priest before he should have left the sacristy. He came and was there for a long time talking with the poor young man, leaning down to hear. Then he baptized him, and said the prayer *Absolve, quaesumus, Domine,* and gave him the sacrament. Sister Rosa, who had lost control of herself, knelt at the foot of the bed crying and thanking God. In the night he died. It seemed a beautiful thing in God to grant them this blessing, that he died in the church.

When I stopped, Miss Hutchinson went on smoking in silence for some time; then she threw down her cigarette on the gravel and put her heel on it.

"That's all," I said.

She began turning her ring round and round.

"That taste for paper crowns he had—up to the very last—that's what I'm thinking."

I did not argue the point.

"Poor devil!"

"Look," I said, "you see the lights coming on there toward Santa Croce; it will soon be night; let's go up to Mother Edith's parlor. It's the ring of cypresses there just under the brothers' wall."

We rose and passing through the gate began to ascend the path up the hill. It wound along among the olives and fruit-trees and the vines, grown as they were in Virgil's day in festoons between clipped elms. At last there was a broader path, an incline that led into an open space. Cypresses bordered this path, and stood in a ring about the open, and climbed on up the slope to the rock cliffs below the wood of San Francesco. On the ground among the straight trunks the late golden

light spread in long rays. You could see the Virgin's shrine against the rock, the dark ivy leaves about it. The edges of the leaves were shining. Under a cypress at the side of the path I saw a red-purple iris standing up from the stones; there was the white ground, the dark tree, the purple flower—that elegiac, passionate beauty.

We stood there looking down over the fading valley and Florence and the hills.

"He's too much for me," Miss Hutchinson said presently; "I mean putting him together. You can usually get a sort of outline of any creature, and sort of fill it in. But this beats me."

I said nothing, but lit another cigarette. She spoke again, to herself mostly.

"So he pretended he was converted, to make these people happy, these nuns!"

"Yes," I said.

"They'll talk about it the rest of their lives. Imagine his doing that, eh?"

At last, when I had only nodded my head and had said nothing more, she turned to me. "Well, then, what about that second poem? Was it the one with the alabaster?"

"Yes," I said.

"Can you quote it too? You knew all of the other one. Can you?"

"I can if you like."

"I'd like to hear it; say it."

I said Rex's poem:

Thou art as alabaster filled with wine,
Wherein the sun of summer shineth through,
Tinged with the sound of bees when the rich vine
Shakes down its garlands in the diamond dew.

Thou art a gleaming saint amid the trees,
Whereon the holy moonlight lieth white,
In some old garden where the centuries
Trail their dark mantles in the silent night.

And songs of lips dead long ago I hear,
Of them whose holy dreams were fraught with pain,
And if I have or have thee not, it were,
O Saint and Shrine, O Life in Life, in vain!

Miss Hutchinson waited for me to finish, then turned on me.

"But I thought you said he didn't mention the woman he loved?"

"He didn't."

"Well, what else do you think he meant by all

that poem? Not that it would change matters any; look how the state of mind in this last poem declines from the first; it would have been the same whether this love-affair turned out well or turned out badly. All in vain anyhow, as he says. For a man like that. I don't fancy the girl suffered much. From my observation, men like that usually make friends with remarkable women, and fall in love with a silly one."

"I see," I said. "*Laudato ingentia rura, exiguum colito*, as Virgil wrote to the farmers. Praise large fields, cultivate a small one."

"Exactly."

"However——"

"Yes?"

"If you mean Rex was shallow, futile," I said, seeing him as clearly as if he stood before me, and thinking of that kind of fatalism of mind he had, "I'd say no; he was deep enough—he just had no anchor or else some anchor in chaos."

"Well, what's the difference," she said, "between that and shallow?"

"All the difference. He gave me a lot."

"Oh, yes, and the nuns a lot."

"And, besides, I'd say Rex's story is not a love-story."

"You men are funny."

She turned away from me and stood there leaning against one of the trees, looking down at Florence, as if she were alone.

In the stillness I could hear far down in the valley a stream running, and above the cypresses the first stars had come out. Presently the night would deepen, the nightingales in the laurels down the slope would begin to sing, and the sky be thick with stars. I was thinking of Rex and what he may have thought of their splendor and certainty.

But I said only, "It's time we started," and we said nothing more till we came to the convent gate and out into the piazza.

MISS SISSIE

MISS SISSIE

BEYOND the line of the hill comes that sudden splendor that announces the rising of the moon. The gold glow spreads quickly, large, pale yellow, with its shadowy configurations and shining rim. Along to the east, farther than the light of the moon it seems, lie the deep valleys, the long, white roads and the Helotes hills.

The ranch is built like a great courtyard with three sides, houses of old stone, all of one story, all opening on to the stone terraces in front of them. There are dried leaves fallen from the live-oaks, which are like ancient ilexes; in the moonlight, where even now it has already come into them, those that are smaller are like olive trees. The cicadas have followed their due season, they sing among the dried leaves in the grass, and in the trees; and against their dry metallic song I hear the shrill frogs farther off, where the stream with its sheltering wood lies at the foot of this high place. As the moments pass, the cicadas are

louder, the moonlight wider spread, the summer night comes closer up around me.

Along this west terrace in front of my room, at the far end from me, the ladies are talking quietly, low voices prattling nothing beyond the pleasant hour. A brighter voice among them cuts in and out; sometimes the same voice breaks off into a droll bright laugh. It is Miss Sissie. Everyone calls her that, and I do, though I have known her but two or three days. I can hear her telling the ladies about a trip she is going to make to the West next month to buy a totem pole, she needs one to put in front of Folly, her house on the Guadalupe. The Santa Fé owns some totem poles, she says; you must find an old blended one, these poles grow fine with age.

They are an old pair, Miss Sissie and her brother. They are cousins of my host's, who could not imagine a summer without a visit from them. He is far into sixty and she nearly as old. She is fairly tall, compact, alive; her long gray eyes have still their black lashes and curious wild light. Her hair is quite white now, it is brushed straight up over her fine, round head into a large knot at the

back like a Spanish woman—there is something austere about her; she looks as if, should you prove to be an ass, she could despise you easily and well.

"You wouldn't think, looking at her now, I reckon," says her brother, who sits smoking in a chair at my end of the terrace, "my sister was as good a rider as was on the ranch, no sirree. But she was, sir, Sissie used to ride with any of the boys."

I reply that she seems very much alive.

"Well, for that matter," he says, "we've just got back from our second trip around the world. That's why we're here, for a little spell of quiet, then Sissie's going to take a friend along to Arizona or out there somewheres. It's a right smart piece round the world, I guess."

To go twice around the world seems to me an odd idea—once around the world, yes, if you like—but twice seems an odd journey. I say nothing, however, and he adds, following up my thought: "Of course we studied out a different route. But I was telling you about Sissie. That's what I was aimin' at. I remember once——"

He begins to tell me about the time his sister had headed off a stampede.

That was forty years ago, on the ranch in Zapate County, when they were both young. He had never married, and his sister had lived with him all these years, and taken all the trips with him, which is to say when they got to travelling—but that was later on.

In those days, he says, the cattlemen used to take a herd to Abilene or to Southwestern Kansas, not Kansas City. It didn't pay to take fewer than a thousand head of cattle, usually there were more. You made ten or twelve miles a day driving them, though, of course, that varied—you had to depend on finding a place with grass, where they could feed at night; you made the trip like that, depending on the pasture by the way.

When cattle sleep they lie on the ground and it is all very quiet, sometimes a moan or heavy breathing, or the noise of some steer getting up and lying down again. That night he was telling me about, the herd was spread out over the prairie waiting to go on north next day, fifteen hundred of them, likely more. It was past twelve o'clock,

and a dark night with low clouds. Then pretty soon it began to thunder, with flashes of lightning.

You never know when a stampede will begin. Sometimes two or three of the cattle get frightened for no reason at all that you can see, or they are scared by a coyote jumping up in their midst; or by lightning, or by the sound of their hoofs going over a bridge, you never know. The cowboys try to stop the stampede by milling the cattle; you ride to the front and try to turn them in, if you can head off the leader in a sort of spiral and get the herd around him, you can bring them to a standstill. If you don't stop the stampede, the herd scatters over the country and the cowboys have to ride here and there to bring them in, and like as not lose a good many or have them stolen.

Well, that night it was Sissie who heard the noises that told her a stampede had begun. She had not undressed herself, but had lain down in her riding-habit and gone to sleep. In those days they wore long riding skirts half way to the horse's ankles, and the collar buttoned up to the throat. Miss Sissie gave the alarm to the cowboys, and sprang on her black horse and rode round and

round on the edge of the herd, turning the cattle in, round and round. He could see her yet; she was about twenty then. When she stopped that stampede.

As her brother is telling me this story, I can see Miss Sissie and her friends at their end of the terrace. Some one has turned the light on in one of the rooms and I can see her more clearly, the white hair and thin, gallant body. She is telling a great tale about her brother's bringing two sacred cows out of India to cross with his herd; they were afraid they'd never get past the border, they'd be murdered by the cows' worshipers, she says. For all that, they escaped and the cows have made a fine breed, the sacred cow crossed with her Folly bull. You can hear her spirited old voice spinning along with this memory that she delights in. Her brother, too, looks at her a moment and hears what she is saying.

"I can see Sissie now," he says, turning to me at last, "in the flashes of lightning, riding round and round on her horse in her long skirt, and her black hair had come down, and mixed with the horse's tail."

CAMPO SANTO

I HAD seen the lady four or five times already during my days in Pisa, at the Campo Santo and the hotel. Her name, I learned from Miss Hutchinson, who in her capacity of New York journalist knows everything before it happens, was Signora Amati, Mrs. Amati that is, for she was plainly American by birth, and she lived in Milan. She was not tall, not short; she had fine gray eyes and a generous wide mouth, with a sort of agreeable but shy nose. I had observed that her hands were beautiful but very still. In her intercourse with people she smiled affably; talking to them vivaciously and looking at them quietly; at the hotel, with the managers and waiters, she was direct and polite. I used to see her at the Campo Santo, walking about, gazing quietly across the vista of the place or looking up at the columns. She bore herself simply and had, as she walked, a kind of casual exaltation.

One day I stood in the Campo Santo at the

north end. I saw the high, slender shafts, the shadows, and heard the silence under that open sky and along the galleries. I had been there for some time and, in a place so perfect and remote, thoughts had come into my mind of the dead and the way we begrudge death to those we love, wishing to keep them with us as long as possible, as if when their moment is over they had not better go, before the betrayal of their beauty by the body's decay, before their bodies slip away from under them and leave them mocked and denied and so much less than they by nature are, travesties indeed of their own natures.

I stood leaning, I remember, against the wall there, with gentle thoughts of people now long dead, whom I had known as a child, and of some who have been so dear and lovely and have grown now very frail and old. The picture came to my mind of a monument that I used to see in my childhood. It was an angelic canopy in an old graveyard in the South. Some one named Banks had set it up. My father told me that years before he had known the family, but, though I knew he was a truthful man, I could never quite believe

in such a mythical possibility; I thought the company the Bankses kept must be the heavenly hosts. This marble canopy with its kneeling angel beneath was doubtless wretched stuff, such a mass of putty and dough surfaces as every one has seen in cemetery sculptures. But all I remember is that kneeling form in its long robes, those hands pressed together and held in front, the marble lilies at the breast. It was a kind of elegy of life, commemorating some moment, something seen once among the trees through a window perhaps, a revelation or long vista seen for the first and ultimate time, something then and there brighter and more memorable than any moment before, of life's eternal supplication and quietness.

Around me, as I thought of the childhood monument, were the four walls of the Campo Santo and the shadow of the roof that rests one side on them and the other on those lines of slender columns that enclose the court. The columns begin high up from the pavement, four feet or more, standing on a solid wall that runs all round, with openings for passageways in the middle of each side and of the ends. Down the long gallery that

the high outer walls and the lower wall around the court make, my eye ran; and from the gallery shade I looked up at the columns rising gray and slender against the light; I saw the line of a cypress and a stretch of blue sky; on the far side of the court the columns' white marble shone in the light, and they defined themselves against the shade beyond, with its glow of frescoes and old sculptures. There were four cypresses within the court and in the centre an altar or pedestal with yellow roses climbing round it. In the air above, against the blue of the sky, white pigeons were flying. Now and then, faintly and almost lost, there came a sound from Pisa, and, nearby, the crackle and darting rustle of the tiny life in the grasses and plants. But the more subtle silence of the eye lay everywhere.

Then after a while, standing there thus, I was aware of Mrs. Amati approaching. I felt that her pace had suddenly quickened at the sight of me. She bowed as she came nearer, looking me in the eye and smiling at least courteously as she passed. Whether she had already intended so or not I was not sure, she seemed now, at any rate, to be on

her way to the exit into the piazza. Perhaps she had already been there a long time; perhaps for some reason on that particular morning she wished to avoid meeting up with any acquaintance, however slightly known. She had forgotten her book; at that moment I saw it lying on a ledge. I went over, looked inside to make sure her name was there, and would have gone after her with it if I had not known that she was half across the piazza by now, past the baptistery and even the duomo. When I returned to the hotel, I reminded myself, I could send it up to her room.

I sat down and presently began to turn over in my mind thoughts about the belief that certain people attach to this place. The earth in it was brought by the Crusaders, seven centuries ago, longer than that indeed, in fifty-three shiploads, from the Holy Land. It is therefore to be regarded as blessed and consecrated ground. This consecration is a simple fact to some; to others it is one more instance, in our all too foolish world, of folly and superstition. For me no such question existed. This blessed consecration is here before my eyes. This plot of earth, this place with its long

galleries of shade, their walls painted over in doomsday and Calvary, Crucifixion and pageantries and damnation, now all ghosts, and beneath them the tombs and monuments; these slight columns of marble beginning so far from the ground and running high up to the marble fretwork of the arches, the sky above them; have made the place itself what their faith declares it. For an idea that to their minds was holy, men have provided a holy body, a form. They have saved their belief from charges of superstition by making it in the visible world what it is already in their souls.

Half an hour later, perhaps, I saw Miss Hutchinson coming. She had said that morning at breakfast that she meant to see the Orcagnas again. She looked, coming toward me now, exactly as she had looked when I had met her in Assisi not long before and had been persuaded to do the Pisa illustrations for her. She was like some little brown, thin bird with a great emerald ring, and was to be regarded just now as very much concentrated—with her tongue in her cheek no doubt—on her article about Pisa for a woman's magazine. It was not hard to imagine what Miss Hutchinson

thought of the Campo Santo, or of the open sky and the white doves flying overhead. They could scarcely have been in what seemed her line. But Orcagna's frescoes, she said, convulsed her. If they had once been full of religious terrors to such as lived in the seven deadly sins, or once been awful and majestic to serious minds, they were no longer so to her. She adored those writhing damned and their garnish of hell fire; she loved those people sitting bolt upright in their graves so nicely dressed; she delighted in those pot bellies stuck with forks; she could never survive this divine Christmas Pantomime of tortures, and always said they made her hungry.

These were the things Miss Hutchinson began to chatter of as she came crackling across to me.

"I never appreciated the one with the red tail before," she began, twenty feet away from me and walking half sidewise as she pointed backward. "It must be hard, putting it in coils like that."

Miss Hutchinson on the subject of the Campo Santo was all well enough with Vermouth and soda, under the bright umbrellas of the hotel terrace; but not here, not with the cloister and the

sky, the marbles in the light and shade, the faint, sweet silence. I had an idea of cutting off her march, as it were. I would lead her by another pass.

"You seemed to know about the Signora Amati," I said. "She was here a moment ago."

My dear, she said, she knew all about it, from an English friend who lived in Milan part of every year and who had talked often of the American lady.

"I always find," she went on, "the English living abroad know a very great deal, my dear."

"In this case I'm glad of it," I said.

"There've been bits, too, about the Amati from others here and there. It's one of those themes in life you could talk on forever."

I said in that case we might begin.

We could sit down, could we not? she said. One's legs were only human, and what about the steps there at the east end? It was shady and you could smell the roses that grew to either side, roses with one's cigarette.

We took one of the walks that cross the cloister from one side to the other, Miss Hutchinson

snatching up a poppy as she passed, and went on down the shaded gallery till we came to the far end, where the bronze eagle stands that the Crusaders brought back from the Sultan's loot. We sat down, leaning against the columns and facing each other on the low steps.

"Not poppy nor mandragora," Miss Hutchinson said, musing as she sat looking at the red flower in her hand. She began pensively to pull it to pieces.

I encouraged her—"Nor all the drawsy syrups of the world——"

"Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep——" She threw away the stem of the poppy, "Ah, well, does any one of us forget what there is to forget?"

There was a pause.

"As to this lady who seems as daft about this place as you are, *mon ami*, they tell me she's always coming here, at the hotel, always telling me."

I did not take up the challenge on the Campo Santo and waited while she chose the first thread of her narrative and began.

"Well, it appears that Signor Amati, the late

Signor Amati, he died last winter in Milan, was a banker and of a good family. He was, of course, the second husband. But she appeared to love him devotedly. I suppose with some women love is the refrain and these various men are only the verses of the song of life."

I looked at Miss Hutchinson, but her eyes were far away at the other end of the court. She had paused a moment before she went on.

"We won't get on that theme, however, now shall we? Let's leave it to Baudelaire—*J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans*—and stick to the Amati. He was born well, well-connected at least, and was a cultivated Milanese. You know what that means with Italians, darling: when one alludes to a piece of music one can hum it through, the same with quoting poetry. It drives me nearly mad; I don't mind what anybody likes to quote if I don't have to sit through it. Before they are through I always wonder who's speaking, the poet or the quoter, both, I usually feel. How much more comfortable it is to forget just what it is you're discussing and remember an impression you once happened to have about it or somebody else

said he had! *Non?* Well, I'm told the Amatis even had a pope, one of the more famous ones who built themselves tombs from Roman ruins. Cultivated and something of a Turk, Signor Amati was, with great eyes that suggested everything, you looked again at him—I saw him myself once in the railroad station is why I can say so; my friend pointed him out to me."

"In Milan?"

"Yes, two years ago. I used to float about Italy a good deal, you know how one does. My friend pointed him out, because his wife, who was with him, was an American. 'Well,' I said to my friend, 'there's a kind of cosmos of passions and dreams about that face, makes you wonder if he really amounts to anything'—used the same sentence later in my article on some poet or other who came over from some poetical country, Flanders, I think, to lecture in America. I can see that face of Amati now. Perhaps, after all, she——"

Miss Hutchinson laughed, she was enjoying herself, and sat there smiling in the sunlight and waiting to hear herself, whatever she might say next.

I said nothing.

"Perhaps after all this woman married a mask," she went on. "Everybody is crazy about masks nowadays, what with the theatres and dancers and the return to Greece and Java—I'm all for Java if we must return. The abstraction, universality and finality of the mask and its beauty. As I once wrote. Well, at any rate, he died. Heart trouble. He was a doomed man, of course, when she married him. His malady, no doubt, had made him cross and wild and uncertain, impossible and wonderful by turns, and that may have drawn her to him, my dear, who knows? Drawn her to him and held her."

For a moment I did not listen very closely to what Miss Hutchinson said; I was turning over in my mind that idea of hers about marrying a mask. When we love a thing, I reflected, it evokes what is beautiful, abstract and permanent in us. It is possible that a certain bone structure, in a face, a noble outline of features, the color and shape of the eyes, the shadow cast on them by the brows, might carry some abstraction like beauty, nobility, passion, depth, that we should feel and be drawn

to, though the person himself has none of the qualities that are expressed thus by his outer aspect; a mask awakens a love in us; we pour out our souls to a body because of a mere writing that is on it.

But that, I checked myself to remember, was not necessarily true of Signora Amati's husband. How should I know anything of him except what I had just been told of his appearance and his malady? I must listen to Miss Hutchinson's story.

Signora Amati had come to Italy, it seemed, after her tragedy in America. She was ill when she came; and so consumed, so bitter and dark with what had been her lot, that she made a vow never to see any of her family again, nor anybody she had ever known at home. She never wrote them letters nor heard from them. The money she had brought with her was enough for a year or two, and by the time that was gone she would be rested, perhaps, and would have had a chance to forget. She planned, when the time came for it, to take some position. She would be the chaperone in a smart school for American girls in Rome, or would teach something or other, she had education enough for that.

That accounted for our heroine so far, Miss Hutchinson said.

"So far," I said.

"I was thinking of her this morning. I saw her as I crawled out of bed and lit a cigarette. She was standing in the garden down there by the fountain, very still, with the sound of the water near her—these Italian fountains and what they do to the human heart! So I sat down on the bed, watching her, and thinking of the opening chapter in her story; it was opening chapter and climax both, I suppose, and that's what interested me. You've heard nothing of it?"

Miss Hutchinson paused, turning the emerald round and round on her finger.

"No, absolutely nothing."

"Well, you can't expect to hear things if you pass your days in graveyards," she said, looking around her coolly.

I merely smiled, letting her accuse me as she liked, and she went on.

"Well, this ought to bring you to. My dear, I'd tell the hotel manager this bit, he'd adore it—if the coffee weren't so odious morning after morning.

"Mrs. Amati came of a modest family in Louisiana. Her father was not a rich man, he was a house painter in some little town, and then, well, painting walls perfectly, or something, whatever you please, gave him a great respect for education; he saw to it that his daughter, whose mother seems to have died soon after the child was born, learned something. Which must have made her a marked girl in that town—" Miss Hutchinson added caustically.

"What town?" I asked.

"Where she was born of course," she replied.

"I see, any town."

"At any rate she grew up more or less educated, may God help her, and took a position in the grammar schools. You can imagine the flutter of pride among the little paint brushes."

Miss Hutchinson went on with Signora Amati's history. A year or so of the teaching had passed and the girl was twenty or so when a young man came to town and opened a bond office. It was a blazing sort of place that not everybody trusted, but he stationed a secretary there and business seemed to be ready to begin. He himself was in

and out, sometimes absent for two or three days, sometimes for a month at a time, while the stenographer went on informing clients and visitors of his dates, listening, making notes, God knows what, until, of course, Miss Hutchinson said, as stenographers do, it seems, she gradually married some one in the town, and another young lady took her post. Meanwhile there was the painter's daughter.

"I suppose it's a part of the mystery of such a creature that one shouldn't know her husband's name," Miss Hutchinson said, "and not even her own name—I don't know whether she's Mary or Sue—Agnes perhaps. We'll call her husband X, then, and go on. Well, X had behind his office a room with a piano and the walls lined with books. He loved music, he loved poetry. You can imagine how marvellous he must have seemed to a serious girl in such a town, who at best had never known anything of men but——"

I said, "cavaliers and statesmen."

Miss Hutchinson broke into that bright, narrow laughter of hers. "Sonorous gentlemen, yes, but simple in outline. And this new young man was different, don't you see? At any rate they married,

in spite, it seems, of her father and sister, who thought less of marrying a man from out of town like that— Or whatever it was they thought. And so life began for her.

"Everything went very well. The only thing was, her husband used to be away a good deal. From time to time, it seems, his business took him here and there on these trips, sometimes quite far but not always. It was simply that he would be called away from home, and went; and she would be left by herself. Time passed and after a while they moved to Texas, San Antonio, where they took a house. And there his charms—and I dare-say hers—got them into the artistic circles—art does circle, my dear, you must admit. There are sure to be distinguished visitors, opera singers on concert tours, poets reading their works, and lecturers. All these are gentry who can have honorable suppers given them or be used as an excuse for paying off your social obligations. To such suppers and teas the new couple soon came to be invited. After a while sometimes he was even asked to introduce the celebrity, and made addresses of welcome which many San Antonians said were glit-

tering: a soaring manner, I judge, and the highly periodic style: Texas still has spasms of oratory, *cherie*, you may be sure."

"Wasn't I suckled on it? In my dear old South," I said.

"Only, well, it was just the same as of old, the trips away from home kept up. Every so often he had to say goodby to his wife when business called him away. And so he would be gone, leaving her there at home. Whether he wrote much to her or not I don't know—we never know the important things in any story, my dear, that's why literature is a luxury and not indispensable like food. Sometimes as far as Chicago he went or farther, if it's possible to go farther, what do you think?"

That meant that Miss Hutchinson would light a cigarette. I expressed no opinion on Chicago as the limit to everything.

"And where was I? His journeys from home, ah, *c'est ça*. What she thought his business was, I don't know, you can't imagine her not being told something. Bonds and huge cloudlike enterprises, is what everybody thought, I suppose, from the kind of house he had. Two or three years passed,

you would have said it was a very happy marriage. And then one day there was a notice in one of the Chicago papers of an attempt to rob a bank somewhere up in Minnesota, and in the course of the hold-up one of the bandits had been killed. It was her husband. My dear, can you imagine it?"

"Great Scott!" I said.

"Exactly. You know I was in San Antonio myself once, doing some publicity for a war film. And so I can picture her going down in the morning, into that divine light—can't you see her taking up the paper—which the boy on the bicycle had screwed up into a twist and shot on to the lawn without stopping—and reading this news? What must she have thought! Thought what anybody would, I imagine. Wouldn't about the worst thing in the world be to find that nothing had any bottom to it, and that the most wonderful thing in your life was built on lies? A good thief you might stand, I'd certainly love him with his big hauls more than I could love one of your small mean grafters. Some scope to his adventures, so that you could take it as a part of the wildheadedness that made him so fascinating—I'm sure this man of

Mrs. Amati's was fascinating—and that made him the silver-tongued orator at those musical banquets and affairs of honor. A marvellous thief would not be so bad then, some delicious creature trying to snatch the world for himself. But to have some one you loved lying to you. To see that these years of love—or whatever you call it—were all based on deception! You can imagine her reading this account in the papers, her young head clear and fatalistic, and going back over the years that she had lived with him. 'So,' she'd say to herself, 'that's what the trips have been.' "

And after that, I thought, though I said nothing of this aloud—then she would remember all the tendernesses, the things he had done for her, the things she knew she had seen in his eyes and knew to be true, no matter what anybody might say, no matter what her first impulses now might be. Thinking of all this now she could hardly believe her senses.

Miss Hutchinson went on, "Isn't it the most terrible story you ever heard, don't you just love it?"

"We'll have to agree," I said, "it was a sorry deal this woman drew of love."

"Yes, Orcagna himself couldn't have invented worse." She waved her hand toward the tortured wall nearby. "She loved both these men and what did they do for her? One of them deceives her from the very first. The other with his moods and whims like a spoilt child, I don't doubt, and his sick man's egotism, letting his heart stop on her at last like that—much she got out of it with him."

"Perhaps they loved her each in his own way," I said.

"Such as it was."

"Each of them may have loved her just as she did each."

"And that brings us to a theme as abstract as even you'd be seeking here, *mon ami.*"

"You mean?"

"I mean one can love another person all one can, or as much as one could possibly love anybody, and still not be able to love as much as the other does."

"Two beings flowing toward one another, but one of them in places has nothing to meet the other with," I said.

"Yes, and—in the same high vein—I'd say, lives

there a journalist so dull of soul as would not know this was a good story?"

A little wind blew over the ground in front of us, sending waves across the light grasses. Miss Hutchinson pointed to them. "Look," she said; and then, when the soft rhythms began again to traverse the Campo Santo, "I hate waves! This eternal reminder of recurrence, the rise and fall of things, their return in us. May God deliver me from rhythms in this world for one short hour. But I daresay that would be difficult."

We sat there for a while with our thoughts. Noon had come on, the light lay everywhere in the court; the stillness and the cool shade deepened in the cloisters. I was thinking of the Campo Santo. In this place, I thought, was gathered up the last harmony of love, which death at last assembles and quiets, taking away what it can of its own kind, and leaving what does not die. In this spot dwelt the elegy and gentleness of all love.

Miss Hutchinson began unexpectedly to turn her ring round and round, and her odd laugh broke out, cutting somehow like the light of a green little emerald through the air, before she said, gaily enough:

"Well, at least she's kept close to the bank, hasn't she? With both husbands, in a way."

I smiled.

"Damned silly joke, you know," she added.

For a while we said nothing.

"This is her book she left here," I said.

"Her book and her heart," Miss Hutchinson chimed.

"And I must send it up to her when I go back to the hotel."

"But I shall doubtless be leaving here sooner than you. I leave everything sooner than you do, darling. I'll take the blessed book. Would it be cricket to see what it is she reads?"

"I don't know," I said, and opened the book, running through the pages where marked passages caught the eye. I read two or three of them, with their crowded, passionate style, so shaken and tortured with life, and stopped finally on one poem in particular where there were six verses marked. They had been marked on both sides with lines up and down the margins, and the page itself was thumbed with reading.

"Shall I read them to you?" I asked.

She nodded.

I read:

"Amor dunque non ha, ne tua beltate,
o fortuna, o durezza, o gran disdegno,
del mio mal colpa, o mio destino, o sorte,

se dentro del tuo cor morte e pietate
porti in un tempo, e ch'l mio basso ingegno
non sappia ardendo trarne altro che morte."

"But what do you expect me to say?" Miss Hutchinson exclaimed finally, when I had left off reading and waited, I suppose, for her comment. "I know how to buy and eat in Italian but I can't do the poetic, as you must know. Kindly translate that. I can feel it between my teeth but I can't translate the words. Tell me and then I'll leave you to your meditation."

"Michelangelo in this sonnet has been comparing the beloved to the marble, himself the sculptor. It is none of these things, he says, disdain, hardness, fate that counts. The thing that counts is what he brings to it and takes from it."

"*Trarne*, at least, I know means to draw," she said, "to take from something."

I read, taking the words simply as they came:

"Love, then, nor your beauty,
or fortune or hardness or disdain,
is not to blame for my ills, nor my destiny, nor fate,

if in your heart death and pity both
you carry, and if my low talent
burning, knows not to draw from it anything but
death——"

Miss Hutchinson cocked her eye and began to turn the ring round and round. "Which means?" she said, without looking at me, and then went on dryly: "No, don't tell me what it means, I've lost my soul but a tinge of it stays like a clot on my brain. If you'll give me one more cigarette, I'll go."

She lit the cigarette and was gone. The creak of the revolving door carried her out of earshot into the piazza.

The Campo Santo was now silent, open to the clear, still sky. I thought of Mrs. Amati and her history, outwardly spectacular, humiliating, like melodrama. In my mind's eye I could see the figure of her, moving along the cloister gallery, look-

ing up at the columns with her quiet eyes, walking with a kind of casual exaltation. I thought of the two men that she had loved and what they had given her in return, and of what life had dealt out to her——

And if from it I draw only death, the fault is mine——

So that was the way she took it.

THE HARP PLAYER

THE HARP PLAYER

Even before I leave the road along the line of stone posts, covered with ivy, where the park lights are, and come to the edge of the cliffs above the sunken gardens, I can hear the harp. Above all the sounds I hear it, like a heart beating. At that moment, and at such a distance, the melody is less, the pulse more. I move along the cliffs, nearer. It is a Mexican harp, less confident, less insistent, than the larger Italian instrument. The throbbing and humming of the strings and their sweet, high, plucking sound comes, faintly muffled, across the space between me and the pavilion on the other side. From below in the gardens here and there rise the voices of people.

It is such a garden as a child might happily have laid out. The whole of it is gay and arbitrary, without design, but pleasant and innocent, the shifting pools with their great lotos flowers, blue, rose and lemon yellow, above the wide

leaves; the cranes, in their green bronze, halting on one foot among them; the paths climbing and rambling; the rock islets and bridges; the screens of bamboo and banana; the scented petunias and bright lilies; and, at the top of the highest cliff and zigzag path, the round pavilion, thatched with palm leaves, a pale fawn color under the hot sun, the place beneath its shade set out with benches and tables. Here drinks and ices may be had all day; and all day from ten until six in the evening, with short rests between, the harp plays.

I cross over along the path, and find me a seat in the pavilion, feeling the summer breeze, shaded from the strong light but seeing the white rocks and dark greens, the glint of the water in the pools, the sharp shadows, and the sun on the shining air. The harp player is a little away from the tables, nearer the pavilion entrance.

He has a head, with its dark skin and gray hair, such as you see in El Greco, though less fantastic, simpler and more solid. But, though the face is thus not so erratic or intense as those faces of El Greco's, nor so personal to any artist's dream, there is the same round skull, and smooth bones in the

brow, the same deep, grave eyes, acute and sad, and the same nose, slightly aquiline, with clear, fine nostrils, the same line of contemplation in the poise of the head. His shirt is like the shirts I have seen in the country districts or on market days in Spain and Italy, home-made, of some plain white cotton stuff, home-washed and ironed without starch. His whole air is clean and decent and grave, and when I have put money in the saucer on the table near him, and thank him for his music and offer him a cigarette, he rises, speaks half a dozen Spanish words of thanks, and bows, all courteous and remote. I seem to be in the presence of some quality, curiously abstract, some state, as if it were human life rather than a man; the vivid and intense vitality is like an animal's; the leanness is ascetic like a visionary's, the quietness is alive like nature.

Only lately a very intelligent man, who has been engaged in Mexico for a long time and knows something of the country, has been telling me that the problem in Mexico is one of finding a central government for a people who have no gift for government and no inclination toward such an end. Indeed, they could not be called a nation, but con-

sist of diverse tribes in as many provinces. Their movement is constantly toward a complete return, away from the Spanish overlay, to the Indian. Left to themselves they would soon divide into the various sections or tribe districts, all of them, doubtless, flying at one another's throats.

This may be true of Mexicans, and, for all I know, be a just prophecy, or it may not. If true, it amounts to saying, then, that though they may have other capacities and talents, they have no gift for government. One man has one gift, one another; there is one glory of the moon and another glory of the stars, and a difference in glory is no lack of it. What ties this man to any society are certain characteristics that he has, certain strong type things, which he inherited, which he was taught once by his elders, and in which through the years he has, more or less consciously, disciplined himself.

Always when I see him these things come into my mind. They seem to arise from him as distinct as the abstractions of Greek myths or of the theatre of Sophocles, clear things written on him as they were written once on the masks, where the

permanent elements of our natures, as set forth in some god or hero or state of mind, were so distinctly stated. In this man they are all curiously Latin in their quality.

He has the *decenza*, as the Italians, for example, mean it—a sense of what is decent, not with the implications of obscenity, exhibition, morality that belong to our word, but of what is becoming, what is clean and proper in its aspect, respectful toward life, fitting. Outwardly, from his clothes, his manner, his expression, and inwardly, you can see that *decenza* exists for him. One is ruled by this decency, because taste is the last, fine morality of the mind and is the soul of the conscience. One may lack a sense of humor, and may put small value on the excitements of individuality; but life is to be presented by what is fitting and by what is proper to the last grace of it. The man, leaning over his harp quietly, rising to thank me, understands this instinctively.

I remember once in a play by the Quinteros brothers a line where the mother said, "My son, you are not good." I thought at the time how that speech would never have been in an English play.

We might have said you are not a good man or are not being good, but not thus merely the word *good*, standing alone like some vivid attribute or fixed, pure quality. In this Latin play, however, it followed in a combination; after a series of other details and in combination with them, to say he was not good was to say a great deal, a wide but also an exact statement. In this sense I can see, from those eyes, that face, that courteous outward order and decorum, that the harp player is good. It is a goodness that consists essentially of a harmony of parts, a health of the spirit, a simple, sweet wholeness of being and heart that, in its region, is like health, a soundness and rightness of physical functions in the body. For this reason this sort of goodness is simple or mystical, but not subjective, not turned in, stewed up, conscious of itself. It has something of a universality, something that falls into a type, something that is, if you like, a subtlety within outlines; and it seems to present a sort of kindly essence that is permanent in us. It proceeds from the whole man; it has no puritanical or pietistic unpleasantness about it or inverted egotism, but only the harmony of nature;

and it is not in danger of losing its sweetness, because it is profoundly natural in its character.

I am forced to wonder what is the exact notion, in his head, of life,—if the day is long to him, if life is long,—and the extent to which he is conscious of his own reflections or is quiescent and charged with feeling and mood like an animal. What does he think of that friendly or prosperous or harsh or vulgar or pressing or busy life in the streets of San Antonio off there to the south, in this bright light and dreamlike air, rising, as Byron wrote of another city, like water columns from the sea? What does he think of this innocent scurrying of the American world around him? I do not know what he thinks out in this direction for himself, but I know that the character of his mind is a curious mixture of metaphysical and realistic, of a patient, sharp acumen and prose, of passion and simple, literal sentiment, and pride, and a fatalistic quietude that, but for those hard, wire muscles and burning eyes, might be taken for mere lazy inertia.

And then I think nothing at all about him, for his harp begins again and persuades me only to

the simple moment, the day, the sun, the pathos and gentleness of time, as the notes of the melody stream out against the lower strings and the leaves in the garden around.

ORA PRO NOBIS

I SAT down at my table at Teresa Fusco's a little after noon on that day in August, with the light from the sun pouring over all things, over the pavement stones, the reeds growing in great jars to screen us from the café next door, the water of the bay, and in the distance the island of Capri and the long shore to Sorrento. Out in front of me, at the end of the raised causeway that led from the quai, rose the shape of the Castel dell' Ovo, brown, golden, sharp with shadows and white light. Overhead the brown awning, with its shadows and its rifts of light, stretched above the tables. And near at hand, lapping constantly at the stone ledge of the quai, the water lay. A little inlet of the Bay of Naples glittered and washed; and on it, in the gleaming blue and the sunlight, moved the boats. Fishing boats, skiffs, and tiny sailboats were moving back and forth and curving here and there upon the bright water, with their

white sails and streaked masts, gliding through the music that filled the air.

Antica Trattoria, it was called, and the guests were sailors, prostitutes, tradesmen, and families with children; and scattered around among them, men of other ports, Greeks, Sicilians, an Arab or two and sailors from the islands south and east. The musicians were playing; a violin, a mandolin and a guitar; the voice of the violin poured out, unbrokenly; it was high, shrill, a little wild, against the boatmen's cries, the hum of the crowd, the lapping of the water close at hand. And underneath the violin the strum of the guitar bound the music to the scene, to the earth underfoot and to the pulse of life around.

I ordered my lunch and sat there, looking about me half-absently, for I had known the place a long time now. At this hour, in this Italian August, life lay pooled within itself, deeply and simply, and at the same time open, without bounds, and luminous like noon. My thoughts, too, were simple and lazy and clear: how far-off the sky looked, how the sails moved in and out of that streaming music! And then at length, in the midst

of these thoughts, my eye fell on a young man sitting at a table in the corner.

He was a young man I had seen daily at the hotel above the town, walking about the terraces, standing after dinner in the twilight looking out over the bay and the sea, doubled over in the library writing up sheet after sheet of paper, always alone. I had never spoken with him, though I had wondered what things might be in that troubled head of his, and had asked myself what were the thoughts that carried him through so many solitary hours, and led him up and down the terraces and gardens in moods so fixed and constant.

I looked at him now as he sat there. The light outside coming in from the sky and reflected from the water too, shone over his pale, fine hair like a bright dust. He was perhaps twenty-five or six. The eyes were looking out of that face directly and yet at the same time vaguely; they were gray eyes, large and heavy, the lids of them tinged with red. The nose was straight and clear, with nostrils that seemed strangely alive. The mouth with its fine, chiselled lips was mobile and a trifle conscious

of itself; the chin was square and heavy without being firm, a sort of plagiarism of manliness. Looking at him your intuition left you very uncertain about this young man; but your curiosity wanted more and more to know just why that should be so. In the course of time our eyes met over an ominous basket of sea urchins that the *padrona* passed about for her guests to see; we smiled at the sight, and I went over and sat down at his table. We began to talk.

I had seen him so many times at the hotel, I said, he had seemed to me an artist at work; if so, I added, with one of those handsome platitudes that show our good intentions, I hoped his labors were meeting with happy results.

Seeing the young man like this and taking him for an artist had been the right thing to do, that was plain. But as for what happened then, I only know that a friendly light had come into his eyes and that a conversation had begun. One of the delights of travel is, of course, the conversations one may encounter, but this passed any I had ever struck. He began shyly at first, but soon was talking with a strange fluency; less a conversation than

a monologue. As he talked his eyes looked into mine, around about us and off into space by turns. Now and then he gave a little laugh, timid and quick, that showed his white, strong teeth.

He had been sitting there thinking, he said, asking himself if the forms of this natural world around him now, this sea and open sky, these clear mountains, under this sun all day and the stars all night, would affect his images of thought; and if, when you are here, you move naturally toward the classic mind, out of our time's glare, as you might seek the shadow under the trees off there in the Villa d'Oro.

From that observation, which made sense enough, he went on. A stream of personal ideas and incidents, intimacies, remarks, philosophies appeared, coursing one after another. They were uttered neither fast nor slow, sometimes with direct implications, sometimes with no connection whatever that I could trace. It was like clouds passing over stars; it was like being fanned in the face; like some one dancing a circle around your mind. He spoke in a way so very well, as if he had written out many of the things he said, or had already

composed and practised them for this golden moment. With every few sentences something deep, pointed or brilliant seemed at hand. But it had not arrived; the speech flowed on into mirage again. Any one, almost, listening to this young man, would have felt moments of chagrin, hearing so many of our choicest thoughts and theories so easily thrown up into the air and then so easily deserted or dropped again into this rosy, rattling limbo of words.

Often, he said, when he read certain authors he had the feeling that he was of the same blood as they. "This man," he would say to himself as he read, "says what I think, he must be a relative of mine, though our names are different." Sometimes he would search out a picture of such an author; he would show it to a friend. Yes, the friend would admit, you look like him; that was true, fantastic as it might seem; and yet why should it not be that some feeling or intuition within us should find its expression or description in our outward self? Sometimes a critic, writing about art, would say something that he himself had known instinctively ever since he could remember; so precisely the

same thought in the two of them that they must be descended from a common ancestor. And as to art—if there had been any permanence about art he would have given himself up to it. Also, it must be confessed, if he had felt really sure of success, he would have stuck it out, but the prospect of failure seemed terrible to him. It might very well be that men are not happy in an industrial civilization, and yet he did not think that artists could give so much to the world as men of science. When the day comes when men of science have made the world a fit place for humanity to live in, ah! then, he granted you, there would be time for artists. He did not think that many of us have a right to become artists, in the professional way, so long as humanity suffered as humanity is suffering to-day. Besides, so many people as artists would be useless, but as doctors they could help a little.

How far Nicaragua seemed away, he said— Before his father brought him to the United States!

He had been born of a Catholic family, he had attended first a Catholic college, then a school of engineering, then he had studied architecture. He had had two years of a New England college, at

Williams. Now he was at school at Heidelberg; he was in his third year of Medicine and was to be a doctor.

Once, after reading a story that opened with Good Friday mass—the music, the incense rising above the splendor and mystery—he had decided to be a Catholic Archbishop. An Archbishop was a man who celebrated mass, wearing those rich vestments of the Roman Church; mass was a grave dance where all the movements were significant. That dream, like many another dream he had had, passed away at last, to his relief (he must confess). He had followed natural reactions, he was no longer a Catholic, and to-day he was just civilized.

The trattoria was almost empty, the visitors gone off to their work or pleasure in the town. A little crowd of people stood near the spot where the musicians were; the violin, the mandolin, the guitar were still playing; and now and then one of the musicians, a short, dark man who played the violin, stepped forward out of line a foot or so, singing parts of the music in a shrill, metallic voice, *La Bella Spagniola* now, and a moment after-

ward the *Foxtrot della Nostalgia.* The young man talked on. I smoked cigarette after cigarette. He declined smoking, tobacco he considered a doubtful blessing.

He began telling me of a long mirror that he had in his room back at the German university. In front of that mirror when there was time, and that was mostly in vacations, he liked to act and dance. Why should he not, though a doctor, know, on occasion, how to be an actor? *La Vida es Sueño,* did I know that drama of Calderon's? He often tried to dance it, trying to discover the right attitudes for that soliloquy where the young man—whom he could feel, as he read the verses, standing within him—is in the lonely tower a prisoner. "Ay misero de mi! Ay infelice!" But the attitudes would not come. He decided to act and not look in the mirror till he felt that he had the right attitude and expression. Everybody, he added philosophically, knew how the face was, it was as expressionless and shallow as a wax doll's at a barber's. But from one's body and gestures much more could be got.

When he was a child, he said, he had heard that

he was descended from the family of Saint Rose of Lima. St. Rose was a saint, and so it seemed to follow that he too must be one. He could not, of course, hope to become a saint, the little boy knew that, but he would try to be good, he wouldn't tease his dog any more. The thing that had to be considered was that he should be worthy of his ancestors. There was a saying of Zarathustra's, "*Ich bin nicht der Mund für diesen Ohren*" (or something like it) and Oscar Wilde in *De Profundis* said that Christ wanted to be a voice to the voiceless.

"I want to be a voice to the voiceless," he said then, almost shouting, as he half rose from his chair; and some of the Italians around us looked up for a moment as if merely to see what new mad *forestiero* had come among them. "I want to be ears to those who have no opportunity for hearing," he said. "For that," he went on, dropping into the most practical tone you could imagine—he had sat down again—"I must combine many arts. First I must be able to cure men's bodies, *mens sana in corpore sano*. Only with healthy bodies have men a right to go to other things. And

there, you see, come into play the rest of my aptitudes for making people happier!" And yet how strange people were, he said, and the human body is a thing so complex and full of mystery. What were we to think when we read, for example, that Lord Bacon always went into a syncope at an eclipse of the moon, or that Erasmus fainted at the smell of fish, or of Catherine de Medici's falling into a swoon at the sight of a rose, even in a picture?

He had been brought up on a plantation that belonged to his father, he grew up seeing no white people—surrounded by Indians whose language he never understood—except the members of his family. He had seen a man on the ground being beaten with long elastic rods till he bled. Also many others treated like animals. And in the midst of the misery in Europe after the War, he had discovered that there was no fatherly God.

That saying of Zarathustra's that God was dead, he had not at first understood. Were there not sunsets and trees after rain? He had watched rivers at sunset, feeling something go out of him that made him part of all his senses perceived, and trying

to tear from them the secret of our nature, as Goethe might say.

Such moments he must bring to others. But his work he must bring to the Amerindians.

He did not know how he should reach the Amerindians. In New York he had worked in a Settlement House, but from Settlements he did not hope for anything much, not for the mass of the ignorant and oppressed. His experience in Europe since the War had made him sceptical of our culture—it is so largely superficial, things have to be lived to become a part of ourselves. Material prosperity is necessary up to a certain point and what the Labor Party in England would do to secure a man's material prosperity seemed to him right enough, but more is needed. As a physician, then, he hoped to reach the Indians. But to avoid organization. All organizations in the long run remained only as a dead weight.

He poured himself a glass of water and drank it as if he were perishing. Then for a moment he sat looking out across the water, then he turned his eyes slowly and absently toward mine.

If you had read Whitman, he said, there was a line—it was in *Calamus*—where it said:

"Who knew too well the sick, sick dread lest the one he loved might secretly be indifferent to him."

He quoted these marvellous lines but did not linger over them, and went on to quote a couplet of Saint Theresa's, the closing verses of a sonnet of Shakespeare's, and then Shelley's line, *I arise from dreams of thee*. But, he said, the finest thing of all about love was in the Greek Anthology, Bianor's poem. He sat with his eyes almost closed, and repeated the lines slowly:

"This man, inconsiderable, mean, yes, a slave, this man is loved and is lord of another's soul."

I knew the poem already. It says everything to be told of love, love's power, love's universality, and love's dark irony as well. But hearing it repeated like that, I was caught up by it more than ever, and could not go dashing on from it at the young man's speed.

As for love, he was saying, this time still on the same subject at least, as for falling in love and the pretty ring-time, Landor had written that to the strongest natures love is always of second interest. He himself could tell me as we sat there that he had been in love once, but love was not

sufficient; *odi et amavi—sed excrucior,* Catullus said, I love and I hate, I know not why, but I am tortured. He himself had been in love. Even yet perhaps—ah, well—perhaps the waves of life wash over the heart as the sea does over the sand.

He had met this girl on the voyage across the Atlantic, only in June it was. He paused and waited, not as if for some human presence to come back to him, but as if he were waiting for a bar of a song to begin. And then, as he started speaking of her, those gray eyes with their heavy lids dilated, the pupils darkened and grew. She had arisen in his mind like a bright theory, a luminous meditation, a cloud of music, all her reality drawn up into himself and lost in his tides.

To see her on deck, he said, talking with her neighbors in the chairs beside her, or at tea in the afternoon, you would have taken her merely for one more young lady used to good society, only prettier, of course. Or at least when you talked to her she seemed beautiful, all beauty. Her father had allowed her to go to Europe to travel with one of those smaller tours that set out yearly, this particular one conducted by a friend of her fam-

ily; she was to join this tour in Paris. She came from Carolina somewhere, and had had the conventional Southern bringing up. It gave you the habit of being with people, associating affably with them, chatting pleasantly. Such a training took for granted either that you had no private thoughts or that you kept them to yourself. You could weep on people's shoulders, you could love or hate them, but you were not supposed to feel the need of people to whom you might express certain inmost things, people with whom—as he put it—you might commune. And so she had never, in a sense, had any intimate friendship, or any talk that went down to her inmost thoughts. It was a certain kind of solitude very hard to contend with or describe.

They had met and had talked hours on end, sitting in the chairs, walking the unfrequented decks down toward the prow, leaning over the rail at night watching the glow of the phosphorescence in the ship's wake. Or they stood looking in the waves for chance reflections of the stars, which were countless and bright; for during the voyage, as the Latin poets said when there was no moon,

the nights were silent—*quam sidera multa cum nox tacit*. She had a way, when he was talking, of listening with her eyes down, looking down, waiting, very still. When she herself talked, and was trying to express to him some idea, some experience, something she had thought of a long time, and never said, and wanted, now that she was saying it, to express perfectly—ah, well, he could see her now, her white hands held close to her breast and opening out like a flower.

A week of the voyage was gone and they were in love as much as you can be in love. One night they had talked for a long time, standing there at the stern, above that track of the ship through the dark waters below them.

He looked hard at me as he went on, "And then next morning, when it was hours late and she hadn't appeared, I went down to her stateroom and knocked. No answer. Then I called. I waited, and she must have rung, for presently the stewardess appeared. In a moment the stewardess came out and said the young lady begged me to excuse her, she was not well. The sea was calm as a lake, so I knew it couldn't be that.

" 'Is she very ill?' I asked.

" 'She's very pale, sir,' the stewardess said.

"I began to tremble, I knew something had happened.

" 'She asks me to tell you, sir, she'll send you a note. Please forgive her,' the stewardess said. I don't know how, but I knew right off that that was the end of it. When the note came it said she had realized, in spite of all she felt for me, that our love could never come to anything, it would be better not to meet again. She asked me to forgive her, and thanked me."

She had retreated from him like that, he said, and given no reason, which convinced him more than anything else that there was no use in his trying to persuade her or to argue. It was all over. What shall we say then? We'll say that, as for love, one's self moves on and finds another life. Finding is all, though Shakespeare said it was ripeness that was all.

Before this story of his love affair came along, I had already begun to listen rather faintly; and now with the story in my mind, I scarcely followed whatever it was he went on to talk about.

I heard only enough to know that it was the same talk, and that it was like hearing, all together, a burlesque of memoirs, an anthology of philosophic fragments, a modern lecture symposium, the confessions of a rambling and loose young saint. And then finally—and all of a sudden, I think it must have been—something was being said that I heard. I recall exactly the words of it.

The last thing I had caught, just before he came to this point, was about his college days at Williams, and from that he must have drifted back to his early life. Then came a sentence that I remember because of what followed it, "Such things are always waiting for me there in the past." Then he said, speaking straight ahead, as if he had written out all this long ago for himself:

"In my childhood I heard the Litany that is said with the Rosary in Latin, in the deep, tropical evening. And I remember once I was standing looking at the distant sea—so distant that it was only like a silvery streak in the horizon, hardly to be distinguished from the sky—leaning against a tree and my sisters were reciting the Litany in Latin and I and a younger brother I had, who

died when I was about fifteen (we were brought up together), answering 'Ora Pro Nobis'; but my sisters did not know the Litany very well, and that made them laugh in such a happy, innocent way. The place where we stood was very high and mountainous, and the evening with its colors and its silence enveloped us and the whole prospect."

He talked on afterward for a time, not very long, I suppose; but none of it, after that speech, must have meant anything to me until I heard him saying that he must go and asking to be excused; even that seemed only vague and oblivious; and I seemed to see him only vaguely as he shook hands with me, bowed and went away, up the steps from the quai to Santa Lucia.

Teresa Fusco's was deserted now, save for some women and old, bent sailors tying a net in a far corner. The evening had not yet begun. The little boats that had crowded the water nearby had gone to their fishing or about the small cargoes of their freight; some were tied up along the quai, their sails furled, their locks without oars. The place was quiet, the bay quiet under the full light of afternoon. The musicians had long since gone.

And I sat on there for a long time, thinking. I thought of this girl, with her eyes looking down when she listened to this man she loved, and, when she spoke to him of something she had long thought about, her white hands held close to her breast and opening out like a flower. By some strange course, what he had last been saying—that speech that had so caught me up—made her story all the sharper in my mind.

Whatever she may have thought within her and never dreamed of saying, never imagined anybody said, in fact, except perhaps certain poets and authors, and these she had read only off and on because of our scattered life nowadays; whatever vague hopes she may have had of finding this high, secret enchantment; whatever hunger for escape, beautiful hours, cloudy change; all these she suddenly met with in this man, they were his world. Through him she was subjected to the power and contagion of words. These lines and ideas that he quoted from authors in so many epochs and places —she heard them and said to herself, "So life is unbroken through the centuries, then! We are not alone." She could not always follow as fast as he

went. Some of the things he was saying dilated in her mind, detained her like a hand laid on her arm and a whisper she must hear a little longer. But let him talk on, in that beautiful, rich, prophetic voice.

And this man that she had somehow found at last—she would fold her wings about that moment of intense life that burned in him. Pity and wonder and love! He was a shining presence moving among her ghosts.

She thought of these beautiful things in him, the light, the excitement, the variety, the aim toward what is marvellous and high. And then, slowly, unwillingly at first, and at last clearly and dumbly, with that strange plain sense that women have, she saw that it was all only a confused flying within him, a stir of lost wings. His genius and failure—it was as if he had a great light but nothing in him for it to fall on.

I could imagine her lying there in her cabin, as if her own soul had mocked her, facing what she had to face. She knew that he was gifted with a soul that was filled with passionate hunger and thirst, a kind of miracle of desire, but that he

would never do anything toward it. It was all hopeless.

She had, of course, felt grief and disappointment like any young girl. But feet like hers are led farther; and there is one truth in the face of which the mere human being feels bitter and rebellious; the mind and soul touched with a strange sense of entrance into the eternal. Did she see that we may find in another something that is most dear to us, that makes us love, but that is present in him only as a god might be, standing within him? Falling in love with a god, confusion with the flesh— Wishing that he will keep the beloved lifted to his own divinity, wishing the beloved ours still— Abstract beauty, tragic presence, that draws us but has no nearness to us, no hope of dear company and long friendly years. It can step out in its divine self and fill us. It exists immortal in the world. It lifts us, absorbs us in its passionate and lovely promise; but it leaves out our lonely bodies. Poor child, figure of the human race!

But the race is forgotten, the dream goes on. And so I found myself now oblivious of her. I had come back to the thing this man had only a mo-

ment since created, something so beautiful and pure and complete, all of a sudden, in the midst of his intense and scatter-brained monologue and his jumble of egotism, confession and culture. I was moved by it, lifted out of the time and the place. I was humbled to think of our ignorance and crass haste, and to think of how in the drab substance of life suddenly something divine appears. Out of this fluent muddle of meditation, study and personal mood, and from this vague, erratic and powerless being, I had seen created that picture—the Litany, and innocence, gentle affection, that elevation and that simplicity, in the evening light,—and I had heard the inexplicable cadence of the words. I had tears in my eyes as I heard again in my mind what the young man had told me: in his childhood, hearing the Litany, said with the Rosary in Latin, in that deep tropical evening.

Leaning against a tree and looking at that distant sea and sky—"and my sisters were reciting the Litany in Latin and I and a younger brother I had, who died when I was about fifteen (we were brought up together), answering '*Ora Pro*

Nobis.' But my sisters did not know the Litany very well, and that made them laugh in such a happy, innocent way. The place where we stood was very high and mountainous, and the evening with its colors and its silence enveloped us and the whole prospect."

I had sat so long with these thoughts that dusk was coming on; there was only the light in the sky and reflected on the water, and the brief sails between. *Ora Pro Nobis*, and pity us for what we do not know! I thought of how defenseless and immortal life is, and of the eternal surprise and miracle in all things.

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